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# ANNALS OF AN ACTIVE LIFE





GENERAL THE RT. HON. SIR NEVIL MACREADY, Bt., G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

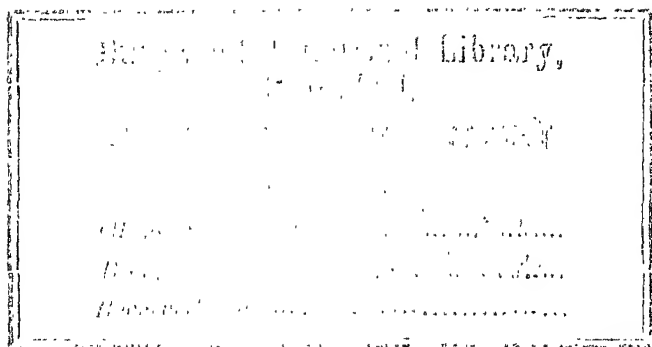
*ANNALS OF AN ACTIVE  
LIFE. By General The  
Rt. Hon. Sir Nevil Macready  
Bart., G.C.M.G., K.C.B.*

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*With Sixteen Illustrations.*

VOLUME II.

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3748  
II

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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A.D.C.	..	..	Aide-de-Camp.
A.G.	..	..	Adjutant-General.
B.E.F.	..	..	British Expeditionary Force.
C.C.S.	..	..	Casualty Clearing Station.
C.-in-C.	..	..	Commander-in-Chief.
C.I.D.	..	..	Criminal Investigation Department.
C.I.G.S.	..	..	Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
D.M.P.	..	..	Dublin Metropolitan Police.
D.O.R.A.	..	..	Defence of the Realm Act.
G.H.Q.	..	..	General Headquarters.
I.G.C.	..	..	Inspector-General of Communications.
I.R.A.	..	..	Irish Republican Army.
M.A.C.	..	..	Motor Ambulance Convoy.
N.C.O.	..	..	Non-Commissioned Officer.
N.I.V.	..	..	National Irish Volunteers.
N.U.P.P.O.	..	..	National Union of Police and Prison Officers.
P.M.	..	..	Prime Minister.
Q.M.A.A.C.	..	..	Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps.
Q.M.G.	..	..	Quartermaster-General.
R.I.C.	..	..	Royal Irish Constabulary.
R.O.I.R.	..	..	Restoration of Order in Ireland Regulations.
S.F.	..	..	Sinn Fein.
U.V.F.	..	..	Ulster Volunteer Force.
V.A.D.	..	..	Voluntary Aid Detachments (Red Cross Society).
W.A.A.C.	..	..	Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.

## CHAPTER XIII.

EARLY in January, 1919, when Mr. E. Shortt\* was appointed Home Secretary on Sir G. Cave becoming a Lord of Appeal, I took an early opportunity of drawing his attention to the unsatisfactory results of the experimental Representative Boards as established in the previous September. An extract from a letter I wrote on 17th January, 1919, explains the difficulties :—

The Metropolitan Police Representative Board was established last September as the result of an interview between the then Secretary of State and delegates from the Prison and Police Officers' Union. The machinery of the Board was discussed and agreed to, and finally published in Police Orders of 13th September, 1918. Previous orders of the 9th and 10th September were cancelled, but I had purposely put in these orders to force the pace. We have now had four months' experience of the Board as then constituted, and about 120 resolutions have been passed and dealt with. That the system of having a Representative Board is sound in a large force like the Metropolitan Police I am convinced, because under the present organization it would be impossible otherwise to get at the pulse of the men. At the same time, the present Board came into being just after the strike, and many men with strong union leanings were elected. Indeed, not long ago the members of the executive committee were made *ex-officio* members of the union executive, with, no doubt, the idea that the Representative Board would really be the union executive under another name. Under the original and present system inspectors, sergeants, and constables are lumped together for the election of representatives, the result being that at the election one inspector, five sergeants, and twenty-six constables were elected. The inspector passed out of the force on pension the other day. It has been many times brought to my notice that the result of having sergeants mixed up with the men is prejudicial to

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\* See Vol I, page 266.



discipline, and I propose that after the election on 31st March next, the Representative Board should be adjusted on the following lines:—

- (1) Constables to elect one divisional representative from among the constables of the division under the same system that exists at present.
- (2) A Representative Board of sergeants of all ranks elected in the same manner as the Constables' Board.
- (3) A Board for sub-divisional inspectors and inspectors consisting of—say 12 members—to be elected by the four Districts and Dockyards.
- (4) A small Board of five for superintendents and chief-inspectors. This is already working and was done at their request.

In the event of a question arising which affects all ranks from superintendents to constables, I suggest that each of the Boards should send a limited number of delegates to discuss the matter together.

I have every reason to believe that the sub-divisional inspectors and inspectors are very dissatisfied with the present state of affairs by which they have no direct representation. I cannot ascertain the feelings of the sergeants without raising the question through the present Board, which I am unwilling to do until I have worked out the new scheme, but I am satisfied that it is very prejudicial to discipline to continue the present arrangement. If you concur generally in my proposal I will work the matter out, send it to the Board, and tell them that I propose with your concurrence to amend the procedure on the lines indicated as from 1st April next.

After some further discussion the scheme as outlined above was approved and came into force on 1st April. It is needless to say that it was violently opposed by the stalwarts of the union because it struck at the very root of their objective to obtain control over all ranks of the force. Incidentally the proposed alteration was on all-fours with an ordinary trade union organization in which the various grades have their own separate representation, a fact which hardly appealed to Marston and his supporters, whose aims were purely personal.

Another reason for some alteration in the procedure of the Board was the manner in which the executive committee conducted

their business by producing a mass of matter, often of the most trivial nature, for the sole purpose of advertising their activities, and of avoiding legitimate duty. It was calculated that up to the month of January, 1919, they had managed to avoid fifty per cent. of days' duty since the previous September, while by 1st March the figure dropped to 518 days' duty out of 1,350 "man-days" for the ten members of the executive committee. The executive committee naturally claimed that all ameliorations and improvements were brought about through their action, a flattering myth which was not borne out by the records.

On Sunday, 19th January, 1919, the Police Union made another bid for notoriety by organizing a meeting in the Albert Hall. I cannot describe it better than by quoting extracts from a letter I wrote to the Prime Minister, who was then on the Continent :—

On Sunday last a meeting was called by the National Union of Police and Prison Officers at the Albert Hall, and some 5,000 turned up, apparently half of them being from the country and borough forces. The meeting seems to have been very stormy; indeed, one of the caretakers of the Albert Hall stated that it was the most stormy meeting that he had ever experienced at the place. Police-constable Marston, the president of the union, was severely heckled, especially by the representatives from the North of England, who wanted to know on what authority he and other officials had been appointed. His answers were apparently not satisfactory, and it came out that Marston's methods were too autocratic and that he had summarily dismissed various union officials for defying his mandates. Among others were Police-constables Crisp and Harrison both of whom figured largely in the late strike. It also came out that Sir L. Chiozza Money is to be approached by the union to advise as to organization, etc.

Marston's speech evidently bored the audience, and after about ten minutes he had to come to a quick finish and produce his so-called reconstruction policy. In the end various resolutions were carried, the important ones being: a resolution demanding full recognition of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers (during a discussion on which some strong remarks were made

against the Metropolitan Representative Board and its existence), instead of direct union representation. Another resolution dealt with the so-called "victimization" of certain policemen of the Midland Railway, and another on what they were pleased to call the violation of your pledge in regard to widows' pensions . . . . A delegate was present from Ireland who made use of some fiery remarks which I have passed on to Sir A. Byrne,\* together with a description of the man. . . .

As regards recognition, I can only say that in my opinion, not only is it impossible, but I believe it to be quite impossible for the union to exist, even as it does to-day, if the country is to have an efficient body of police on whom the authorities can absolutely rely.

(The letter then goes on to describe the steps taken in case of a sudden strike to which allusion has already been made.)

Just at this time a wave of "nerves" swept over Whitehall on account, apparently, of a telephone conversation having been overheard and misconstrued, and I was sent for by Mr. Bonar Law, who was evidently somewhat agitated in consequence. I reassured him that if a strike did occur I had no anxiety as to the result. My confidence in the loyalty of the force as a whole had been built up by a series of small incidents, many unimportant in themselves, of which the following is an example. One day I received from the representative of a division a complaint that the men of the division objected to being on duty for twelve hours at a stretch during a recent strike on the Tubes and in the power stations. I immediately published the whole case in Police Orders, and was presently inundated with expressions of loyalty, not only from other divisions but from the very one from which the complaint came, disavowing the action of their representative. A few examples of this kind showed clearly that the tide of loyalty was flowing.

The strike on the Tubes lasted for some seven days, during which time arrangements were made to bring Government

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\* Sir A. Byrne, Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary. See page 239.

employees living in the suburbs to their work in Army lorries, a measure which caused much entertainment to both sexes. All police duties were carried out without a hitch although the men were called upon to work long hours.

Owing no doubt to the prevalent idea among some of the police that whatever they might do the union would protect them, there was about this time a regular epidemic of men absenting themselves from their beats for several hours, thus leaving the areas for which they were responsible unprotected, just when owing to the demobilization of the Army considerable numbers of bad characters were returning to their former haunts. A carefully worded order was published drawing attention to these serious lapses from duty, the order being read for several weeks to all men parading for duty, and every case that afterwards occurred was dealt with by dismissal from the force, a severe punishment, but not too severe for men who for no excuse left the citizens for whose safety they were responsible, and by whom they were paid, at the mercy of any gang of burglars.

A few examples were sufficient to cure the evil, but Marston and his union executive did not lose the opportunity of denouncing my action as "barbarous militarism." I have never been able to see where the "militarism" came in. If as a tax and rate payer I pay a man to protect me, and he is found playing cards and drinking in a public-house, the obvious course would seem to be to get rid of him and to find someone who would do the work for which he is paid. But logic was never a strong point with the Police Union.

I have already mentioned that on 21st February, 1919, the executive committee of the Board had brought matters to a climax, so far as their intercourse with me was concerned, by refusing to accept as a fact a statement I had made to the secretary of the committee. Whether the secretary misunderstood me or wilfully misinterpreted what I had said to him did not affect the point at

issue, as when the matter was again referred to me I explained exactly what had passed between us. On this the executive committee passed a resolution declining to accept my statement.

On the 24th February I went to the room where they had locked themselves in, as was their custom, and told them that I declined to hold any further communication with those of the executive committee who had been parties to the resolution, but, in order to prevent a deadlock, until the new elections took place I was prepared to receive communications from those members of the executive committee who had not been parties to the offensive resolution. I happened to know that that resolution had not been drafted by the full committee. The whole Board, however, endorsed the action of its executive committee, who then asked for an interview with the Secretary of State, to whom the resolution had been sent by me without comment. In his reply the Secretary of State was "clearly of opinion that the terms of the resolution are of such a character that the Commissioner was fully justified in refusing to receive any members of the executive committee who were parties to it, and in these circumstances feels that no useful purpose would be served by his receiving the proposed deputation."

Here is a resolution typical of the attitude of these men :—

RESOLUTION 189—Proposed and seconded.

In view of the fact that the Commissioner may endeavour to wilfully delay the reply of the Home Secretary until after the 6th instant, this Board do instruct its secretary to forthwith wait upon the Commissioner's secretary and ascertain if any reply has been received.

Carried unanimously.

This resolution was not carried into effect, as the reply was received just after the resolution was passed.

Small wonder if I thought that the patience with which Job is credited would not bear comparison with that I had to exercise until the psychological moment should arrive, or that I told the

Prime Minister in conversation that had I known what I was in for wild horses would not have dragged me into Scotland Yard.

Within a couple of days of this *contretemps* an incident occurred calculated to impair all the progress that had been made during the past five months towards weakening the hold of the union on the police forces throughout the country. An Industrial Conference had been assembled under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour to which an official invitation had been sent to Police-constable Marston, as president of the Police Union, by a subordinate official in the Ministry of Labour. The invitation was, of course, accepted by Marston, who applied for the necessary leave from duty in order to attend, and the circumstance was paraded as a proof that the union was recognized by the Government. I lost no time in lodging a strong objection with the Home Office, and described my interview with Mr. H—— in the following letter to the Under-Secretary :—

Dear Troup,

26th February, 1919,

Here is what I have put on Marston's application after interviewing Mr. H..... at the Ministry of Labour. The facts are as given me by H....., and he told me distinctly that he understood that the Police Union was recognized by the Government. I let him understand that if I had been his boss he would have had just the time necessary to put on his hat, and get out of the place for all time, and I hope I have made him thoroughly uncomfortable as I impressed upon him that what he had done might have very far-reaching consequences. The whole thing is really most disheartening.

Yours sincerely,

And disheartening indeed it was, for it gave the impression to waverers, of whom there were many, that the Government was in reality not supporting my efforts to place the force on a sound footing. The only ray of light in the whole affair was that Marston, when speaking at the joint committee of the Industrial Conference, took no pains to conceal his intentions to upset the established order of police organization. As one newspaper commented at the time : "The remarks of the Secretary (*sic*) of the

Police and Prison Officials' Union at a recent industrial conference show how utterly impossible it would be for police officials to fulfil the functions of their office if any recognition of a union among them is permitted. The police are the servants of the community, and must obey the orders of the Government of the day, as representing the whole community, including themselves."

On 3rd March, owing to the situation that had been created by the executive committee's action and by the blunder on the part of the Ministry of Labour, I decided to address the full Board of Representatives in order to test the atmosphere, and came away convinced that the Board had but one intention, which was to force the pace and make the position impossible. The same afternoon at a conference at the Home Office to discuss steps to be taken in case of labour trouble I frankly admitted that at the moment I could not depend on the force. That the large majority of the men were loyal, and that that majority had been steadily increasing up to a few days previously, I knew to be a fact, but the influence of the hostile Representative Board was still powerful enough to paralyse police action in the event of the force being called upon to quell labour riots.

If the country had been free from labour unrest the question of the police would not have been so difficult to solve ; as things were I felt that the only thing to do was to keep smiling, and trust to Marston and his supporters to make a false step either from nervousness or from over-confidence.

On the 4th March I handed the new proposals, already referred to, for separate Boards for each rank, to the Board, with a covering minute which ran as follows :—

" In notifying the following constitution for the Metropolitan Police Representative Boards for the year commencing the 1st of April, 1919, which has received the sanction of the Secretary of State, the Commissioner has been guided by the experience gained during the last six months while giving every consideration to proposals which have been put before him by the various ranks.

“ The present Representative Board put forward proposals under which, as at present, one Board should represent the interests of all ranks of the force below that of chief inspector, with power to co-opt committees of various ranks when matters appertaining to all ranks were brought forward. The scheme also was so framed as to practically throw the entire administration and working of the Board into the hands of the executive committee, whereby, while the responsibility for the force rested on the Commissioner's shoulders, the power in all matters that might come before the Representative Board, including elections, would pass into the hands of the Board, a situation which would be impossible in view of the organization of the force.

“ The elected committee of sergeants put forward proposals practically on the same lines as those of the Representative Board, while the subdivisional inspectors and inspectors were unanimous that their interests should be looked after by a Board composed of officers of their own ranks.

“ The object of the Representative Board, as originally laid down, is to bring to the notice of the Commissioner matters affecting the conditions of service and the welfare of the various ranks so that he may investigate them, and so far as may be possible rectify them, or bring them forward for the consideration of higher authority. So long as the Metropolitan Police remains a disciplined and organized force under a Minister of the Crown the final decision in all matters affecting it must rest with the authorities who are responsible to the State for its efficiency and well-being, and, in the opinion of the Commissioner judging from his experience during the last six months, it is impossible that the discipline necessary to the efficiency of the force can be maintained if the interests of officers are placed in the hands of the lower ranks, or if, in discussions which affect the force as a whole, officers sink their rank and place themselves on the same level as those who are under their orders on actual duty. A matter like this cannot be treated in the same way as if officers and men were engaged in sport, where, for the moment, the question of rank is sunk, and all take their stand on their proficiency in the game.

“ The Commissioner has been obliged to place a limit on the deliberations of the executive committee and of the Representative Board, because, in his opinion, the representatives have been withdrawn from their duty for periods far in excess of the necessity of the case. An investigation of the amount of duty performed by members of the executive committee since the first sitting of the Board shows that the members of the executive committee have been withdrawn from their duties for, approximately, two days in every three. While some matters that are brought forward can be adjusted at once, others require considerable investigation, and therefore if a large number of the questions require consideration at the same time other work in the Commissioner's office is of necessity delayed.



Urgent matters can at any time be brought to the notice of the Commissioner by the secretary of the Board.

“ In the proposals both of the Representative Board, and of the sergeants, a clear pronouncement was made that the Representative Board was merely looked upon as an emergency measure pending the recognition by the Government of the Police and Prison Officers’ Union. The Commissioner has to point out to the whole force, as he has already done to the Representative Board, that until such time as the Government may see fit to recognize the union, there can be no question of basing proposals for the welfare of the Metropolitan Police on the recognition of the union. At the present moment the union has not been recognized by the Government, and the organization of the Representative Board for the coming year must be based on that fact. If, and when, recognition is given, the whole position will no doubt have to be reconsidered, and possibly the Representative Board remodelled, but, until that time comes, the Commissioner looks to the force to cheerfully carry out the obligations which every man in it has voluntarily accepted at the hands of the Government, and to co-operate with him in restoring the confidence in the force which yet remains to be regained.

“ Finally, the Commissioner trusts that all ranks, both for their own sakes and for the sake of the force to which they belong, will take a personal interest in the forthcoming election, both in regard to the selection of candidates and to recording their votes. If the Board is to be of real use representatives must be men who have the full confidence of those by whom they are elected, and also the confidence of the Commissioner that they are working solely in the interests of the force, and not from personal motives or in the interests of an organization which has not the countenance of the Government.”

The Representative Board at once protested against the new scheme, and demanded an interview with the Secretary of State. This was granted on 7th March, when Mr. Shortt was prepared to discuss the new proposals with the men, who, however, refused to speak of anything but what they were pleased to term “the violation of the constitution of the Board,” the meeting therefore broke up without any result. A few days later, thanks to the strength shown by Mr. Shortt, the Cabinet decided that under no circumstances would the Police Union be recognized, a decision which was given effect to in the following order :—

“ In view of the interference of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers with the discipline of the Service and the inducement to members of the force to withhold their services, the Commissioner, with

the approval of the Secretary of State, calls upon all members of the force to forthwith sever their connection with such union. The Commissioner would point out that any member of the force failing to comply with this direction will be liable to dismissal from the force.

"The Commissioner regrets that the acts of the Union of Police and Prison Officers should necessitate the issue of the above direction. Every reasonable suggestion for the improvement of the existing conditions of the force has been or is being investigated, and where investigation has disclosed a well-founded grievance steps have been or are being taken to remedy matters.

"The Secretary of State has appointed a Committee to consider and report whether any and what changes should be made in the method of recruiting for, the conditions of service, and the rates of pay, pension, and allowances of, the police force of England, Wales, and Scotland. This Committee is actively engaged in its investigations. The Commissioner has appointed a committee of inquiry into certain allegations which have been brought to his notice in regard to the medical treatment of officers and men by divisional surgeons. The committee is investigating the matters in question.

"In fact no legitimate grievance or well-founded complaint remains or will be allowed to remain uninvestigated, and, where necessary, action has been or will be taken to put matters right, but the Union of Police and Prison Officers does not act with the authorities as was hoped. On the contrary, certain members of the union have set the authority of the Commissioner at defiance. Its actions make the proper maintenance of discipline in the force impossible. The Secretary of State, therefore, while giving the force assurances of sympathetic consideration in all matters touching its welfare, and while desiring to provide the force with all proper safeguards, has decided in the public interest that no member of the force, present or future, shall continue to be a member of or join the Union of Police and Prison Officers or any like association."

The Committee referred to in the above order to investigate the rates of pay etc., was that presided over by Lord Desborough,\* which fixed the rates of police pay, etc., at present in force throughout Great Britain.

From the time the orders calling upon men to sever their connection with the union and notifying the changes in the Representative Board were published events began to move rapidly forward, and it may be said that open war was declared by the Police Union on the Government and its representatives.

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\* William Henry Grenfell, 1st Baron Desborough, K.C.V.O.

The union officials in the meantime made no secret of the fact that in virtue of their position in the police they purloined official correspondence, a point to which I made reference in my speech at The Queen's Hall.

Towards the end of March *The Daily Herald*, the main support of the Police Union in the newspaper world, came unexpectedly to my assistance by flooding the streets with a poster in large type :

MOVE MACREADY ON

followed a few weeks later by another :

MACREADY MAKE READY TO GO

One of these posters I stuck up on the wall behind my office chair, and the other on the screen which people had to pass when leaving the room. The effect of having these unfulfilled aspirations staring them in the face when they came to see me was disconcerting in the extreme to those who had made up their minds to get me out of Scotland Yard, and afforded me a good deal of quiet amusement. A gentleman on *The Daily Herald* staff told me years afterwards that when *The Daily Herald* heard of the use I had made of their posters they gave me up as a bad job. For many years of my official life I was a constant reader of *The Morning Post* and of *The Daily Herald*, as I found that by absorbing extreme ideas on both sides of a subject one was generally able to strike a happy mean.

The activities of the Police Union had in the meantime been greatly developed by the ability of J. H. Hayes, who had resigned from the Metropolitan Police, in which he held the rank of sergeant, to become the general secretary of the union. Hayes was a good officer and one on whom I had my eye for future advancement. I knew that he was in with the union, but I had hopes that, being a level-headed man, he would come to see the impossibility of a Soviet organization in any disciplined force.

One day he came to see me in my office and told me that he

intended to resign. I was genuinely sorry and endeavoured to dissuade him. He said that he had been offered the post of secretary to the union at a salary of £500 a year. I suggested that in the event of the union collapsing he would find himself left in the lurch, while from what I had seen of him his future in the police was assured. However, he would not be convinced and said that in any case his new position would give him many opportunities in public life. When I pointed out of the window towards the Houses of Parliament and suggested that he might have ambitions in the direction of the "talking house," he half jokingly almost admitted the soft impeachment! I am glad that he has now obtained his ambition, and no doubt a sense of responsibility for the destinies of the nation, coupled with his experiences during the summer of 1919, will modify the views he then held, especially if the political party of which he is a member should have occasion to rely on the police for the preservation of law and order, and incidentally for their own protection.

Police-constable Marston still remained a figure-head of the union, and as such appeared on a platform at a meeting in Hyde Park on 30th March, organized by Mr. Lansbury,\* at which the usual platitudes about the recognition of the union were poured out for the benefit of Sunday strollers in the park, of whom on this occasion I made one, being anxious not to lose an opportunity of seeing how far Marston and his friends would go. The question of taking disciplinary action against Marston was considered, but apart from the fact that at that time there was no regulation expressly forbidding policemen from taking part in public meetings, I did not consider his action in this matter of sufficient importance to risk his adding a crown of martyrdom to his other qualifications as president of the union. Events, too, were now speeding swiftly towards a crisis.

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\* George Lansbury, M.P. (Lab.), 1910-1912, and since 1922. Formerly editor of *The Daily Herald*.

During the last days of March the usual orders were posted up at the various stations bearing on the procedure to be adopted at the elections of the new Representative Boards on 1st April. These orders were signed by senior officers of the various divisions. At one station a police-constable of the name of Spackman, incited by officials of the Police Union, wrote "No Action" on the order, signing his name thereto. It is difficult to imagine a more serious breach of discipline, to use a mild term, than that of a constable who openly incites disobedience of orders issued under the authority of the Chief of the force.

Spackman was brought before a Discipline Board and was sentenced to be dismissed from the force. He appealed, as he was entitled to, to me, and I saw him in my office with his friend and adviser, another constable. He advanced nothing on his behalf except the usual claim of a good character and compassion for his wife and children. I told him that though I knew that he was the victim of bad advice given to him by others, who took good care to shelter themselves, I had no alternative but to let the sentence of dismissal stand.

This case of Spackman became one of the principal battle cries of the Police Union up to the time of the strike which took place in the following August. To have hesitated for a moment in the face of such defiance of authority would have brought down the whole organization of the Metropolitan Police like a pack of cards about my head. On the 1st April, 1919, the elections for the new Representative Board took place and resulted in a boycott so far as the sergeants' and constables' Boards were concerned, only about fifty per cent of representatives for either coming forward for election. I gave instructions that the new Boards were to carry on with such members as had been elected, and in view of the fact that there was a mass of resolutions left over by the old Board which had to be looked into, I was not sorry to have breathing time in order to devote more attention to the activities of

the union. As the weeks rolled by one division after another accepted the new organization, so that before the end of the summer the different Representative Boards were working with their full quota of members.

In the meantime Hayes, who was getting busy at his work of organizing the union, began a correspondence with me which I at once put a stop to, pointing out to him that I could take no cognizance of an organization which had no official connection with the Metropolitan Police.

At the end of April I received an official application from the Police Union to hold a meeting in Trafalgar Square on the afternoon of Sunday, 4th May, 1919. Under the Trafalgar Square Act, 1844, meetings are allowed in the square under certain conditions with the consent of the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, in whose office lists of applications are recorded, and the necessary permission given in order of application, so as to avoid a clash of different interests on the same day. I was a good deal amused at the union having to make an application to me for permission to hold a meeting of which one of the principal objects was to kick me out of the Yard. Some of my more serious-minded assistants were I think deeply shocked, and were against my giving permission. I knew that such action would only be playing the union game, and also it is not everybody who can claim to be the hero of a Trafalgar Square meeting!

Permission was given, and as the ostensible object of the meeting according to *The Daily Herald*, the press trumpet of the union, was to call attention to the case of ex-Police-constable Spackman, I published the full facts of his case in an order to the force, informing them at the same time that a union meeting would be held in Trafalgar Square, and ended up by telling the men that I could hardly imagine that those who had any regard to their own self-respect, or to the oath which they had taken when they voluntarily joined the force, would attend. A goodly number,

however, did attend, enough to well fill the square. I had a quiet lunch at the Garrick Club, one of the most peaceful spots in London on a Sunday, and about 3 p.m. strolled down to the square taking up my position on a "refuge" just opposite the Admiralty Arch.

The procession with bands and banners marched up Whitehall, passing my "refuge" so closely that the processionists almost brushed against those of us who were standing there. Although I could not help being amused, it was at the same time sad to see some thousands of men belonging to what had been the finest police force in the world, the great majority of whom were still good men and true—except for the weakness of not being able to withstand being called "bloody blacklegs" by men who were not fit to black their boots—exhibiting themselves to a public who looked on with pitying indifference. I caught the eyes of many men whom I knew by sight, and of others who I saw knew me, and from their expressions it was evident that they were neither enjoying themselves nor proud of their exploit; indeed, unless my ear deceived me more than one bandsman played a false note as he recognized me. There was a sad lack of humour about the whole performance when it is realized that the procession was solemnly shepherded by their own comrades, mounted and on foot. On the plinth of Nelson's Pillar, Police-constable Marston, Hayes, Police-constable Richards (Spackman's friend), Spackman himself, Mr. Pemberton Billing, M.P., Mr. Carmichael, of the London Trades Council, and others prepared to enjoy the sound of their own voices. Bands ranged up round the steps, and banners added a touch of colour to the scene, one inscribed with an invitation to myself to clear out, which was next day appropriated by *The Daily Herald* for a poster. Police-constable Richards gave the crowd his version of the Spackman case, and Mr. Carmichael told us that all the butchers in London would come out on strike on behalf of their friends the police.



*J. Russell & Sons, Baker Street, W. 1*

THE AUTHOR WHEN COMMISSIONER OF METROPOLITAN POLICE





When I heard this announcement it struck me as unfortunate, because as a rule the policeman plays a good knife and fork, and any compulsory diminution of his rations, even in his own interests, would assuredly annoy him. One speaker said he knew I was in the crowd and invited me to come up and make a speech. The time, however, had not yet arrived for that, so with my immediate neighbours in the crowd I looked about for myself. Finally resolutions were passed that Spackman's case must be reconsidered, that the punishments for men leaving their beats must be reviewed, and that full and frank recognition must be given to the Police Union. The crowd then broke up.

From a few words I had with some of the police on duty it was evident that they bitterly resented the exhibition into which their comrades had been led. Among the spectators I noticed Mr. Shortt, who never lost the opportunity of showing his interest in the force during the time he was Home Secretary. The majority of Cabinet Ministers would I fancy have thought it rather risky to be mixed up in a crowd called together to criticize their own department. The next day I was off to Paris to attend a meeting of the Anglo-French War Graves Committee, and took the opportunity of telling Mr. Lloyd George about police affairs in London, and of my forecast for the future.

On 17th May, 1919, a parade of 2,300 Metropolitan Police took place on the Horse Guards' parade, whence we marched to the Abbey where a memorial service took place for the 360 men of the force who had given their lives during the war, out of a total of 4,027 who had joined up. The honour paid to the force by the presence of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, and H.R.H. Princess Victoria was deeply appreciated by all ranks, and helped greatly at this particular time to strengthen the spirit of loyalty among the men.

An unfortunate riot occurred on 26th May, 1919, when twenty

police were injured under the following circumstances. A meeting of so-called demobilized soldiers took place in Hyde Park, when it was at once evident that the men had no regard for their leaders, nor had the leaders any control over the men. About 5 p.m. they decided to march to Buckingham Palace and to the Houses of Parliament. It is well known that when Parliament is sitting no procession is allowed within a mile of the House under an order of the House itself. The mob was headed off by the police into Grosvenor Place and there split up, some going to Buckingham Palace Road and others to Victoria Street. Unfortunately at the former place road repairs were in progress and the police were attacked with blocks of wood, scaffolding poles, etc., some being severely injured. In Victoria Street stones, bottles and other missiles were used, the police being forced back as far as St. Margaret's Church, when the officer in charge found it necessary to disperse the crowd by a baton charge. Nearly six hundred police were employed, who, from all reports, showed the greatest patience and forbearance. No doubt a proportion of the rioters were ex-soldiers, but a considerable number were the riffraff who are always in evidence when trouble is afoot, many of them low foreigners, whose aim and hope is to create chaos in order to indulge in an orgy of looting. The behaviour of the police left nothing to be desired, but the opportunity was too good to be lost by Mr. J. H. Hayes, who unburdened himself in the following apologetic letter through the columns of *The Daily Herald* on 27th May, 1919 :—

The Police Union much regrets the serious incident near the House of Commons, when the police came into conflict with the demonstration of the D.D.S. and S., who were demanding what is their undoubted right—work. We desire to point out, both to the federation and to the general public, that the responsibility for the occurrence rests solely upon the Home Secretary and the Commissioner of Police. The rule about no demonstration being allowed to approach within one mile of the House is typical of many

foolish and dangerous regulations that help to segregate the police from the rest of the workers. Further, we state emphatically that the only solution for occurrences of this kind is the democratization of the police force, the ending of militarism in the Metropolitan Force, the full and complete recognition of the union, and the closer linking up of the police with organized labour.

Finally, we appeal to the discharged soldiers and sailors not to judge the union on yesterday's happenings. Let them blame the Government and the Home Secretary, the Commissioner of Police and the military system against which we are strenuously fighting. As a union, we looked (*sic*) upon our comrades in the workshops and from the Army as comrades.

(Signed) J. H. HAYES.

General Secretary, National Union of Police and  
Prison Officers.

This effusion created considerable annoyance in the ranks of the Metropolitan Police, who had been roughly handled by a dangerous mob, and I fancy lost many adherents to the union. Now that Mr. Hayes sits in the House of Commons, one would be curious to know if his sentiments in regard to the rule against processions approaching the House when in session have changed.

On 29th May, 1919, to my intense relief, I obtained the sanction of the Prime Minister to publish the following order, so that if a strike did take place every officer and man in the force would be fully aware of the consequences, and incidentally it would be difficult for the Government to weaken under pressure towards making terms with men who might withdraw from duty :—

*“To Chief Constables and Superintendents:*

“ You will take steps to bring the attached order (A) to the notice of every officer and man under your command.

“ In the event of a strike in the Metropolitan Police, officers of the rank of sergeants and upwards must, if necessary, be on duty continuously and remain at their place of duty.

“ The occupation of station houses by the military will be merely for the protection of the buildings, and to free every available police officer for police duty. This should be fully explained to the force.

“ Lists of officers or men who have failed to parade for duty will be rendered to the Commissioner daily, and the Commissioner holds

superintendents personally responsible that each case has been investigated, and that there is no doubt whatever that the officer or man has knowingly and wilfully withdrawn his services. The Commissioner will be at the Commissioner's office. Constant reports will be sent by telephone, telegraph, or orderly.

" C. F. N. M.

" 30th May, 1919.

# A

## " POLICE ORDER.

" It having come to the knowledge of the Commissioner that a movement is on foot to induce the Metropolitan Police to again withdraw from their duty to the State, although the Commissioner is confident that the great majority of the force have no intention of so doing, he considers that, in view of the events of August, 1918, it is necessary for him to make known clearly the consequences that will overtake any officer or man who may be led away by persons who place individual interests before those of the State.

" It is to be distinctly understood by all ranks that any officer or man, of whatever rank, who fails to report in the ordinary course of duty, or when called upon, will be forthwith dismissed from the force. Such officer or man will under no circumstances be permitted to rejoin the Metropolitan Police, and dismissal will result in the loss of all service counting towards pension. The Commissioner will be unable to accept excuses that men are unable to parade or carry on their work owing to intimidation.

" Officers and men will, if necessary, defend themselves by all legitimate means if interfered with in the execution of their duty."

In December, 1918, I had drafted an order on similar lines when a strike seemed imminent, but was unable to obtain Sir George Cave's consent to its publication, as he considered that there would be time enough to obtain the Prime Minister's concurrence if, and when, the strike took place—a decision which I did not consider satisfactory, as every hour's delay on such occasions is fraught with danger. To the publication of the order of 30th May, 1919, I attribute, more than to anything else, the failure of the strike which broke out in the following August. The order put the issue plainly before the force, and by indicating clearly that the Government would not be satisfied with half measures, acted as a counterblast to the insidious propaganda of the union that Labour was stronger than the Government.

At the time the order was published a ballot was in progress throughout the police forces in the United Kingdom to determine whether the men would come out on strike or not. At a meeting in Hyde Park on Sunday, 1st June, 1919, Hayes announced the figures as 44,539 for a strike and 4,324 against. But the strike did not materialize for the moment. The reasons for this were not far to seek. In speeches made by Hayes and other union officials statements had been made to the effect that £100,000 had been voted by the Miners' Federation to the strike fund, that the Triple Alliance had pledged its support in writing, and that Bob Smillie\* had been given an open cheque by the miners to fill in for whatever sum he thought fit for the support of the Police Union. These statements were mere fictions on the part of Hayes and his colleagues to entrap their former comrades, as devoid of foundation as the allegation that I had smuggled tanks, machine guns and other engines of war into the police stations. I rather fancy also that one cause of delay in declaring a strike on the part of the executive of the union was the intervention of powerful Labour influences, who realized the unscrupulous methods which were being used to mislead the men. Hayes endeavoured to camouflage his position by a statement that he had received a message from the Prime Minister to the effect that "he (the Prime Minister) could do nothing further *at present*," stress being laid on the "at present" in order to convey the impression that ultimate recognition of the union would be given. This statement was as devoid of truth as most of his other assertions, the Prime Minister having had no communication with him on the subject. From evidence that came into my possession it was clear that the ballot had been faked, and that the results as announced were totally unreliable.

The meeting in Hyde Park was a fiasco, and it was evident

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\* Robert Smillie, M.P. (Lab.) Morpeth since 1923. President Miners' Federation of Great Britain, 1912-21.

that the union were not happy. Desperate efforts were made to get at the Prime Minister, who was in Paris, Mr. Pemberton Billing volunteering to fly over and put the union case before him. Mr. Lloyd George, however, was not to be drawn. The issue after all was so elementary, merely : Were the police to be under the authority of the Government or to be at the beck and call of the self-constituted union executive ?

For some time I had been turning over in my mind how I could get into personal touch with a considerable body of the force, a matter, as I have already described, of great difficulty in a force of 20,000 men organized like the Metropolitans. My idea was to collect as many as I could in some large hall, and have a heart-to-heart talk with them. I mentioned it to the superintendents at one of our weekly meetings. They thought the idea a good one, but some of them were somewhat doubtful as to the result of the experiment. Mr. Shortt was in favour of the project and gave me some valuable hints, indeed from the time he took office his support of my efforts was constant and unswerving.

The next question was to find a hall sufficiently large, and where my voice would carry. The Albert Hall was out of the question, it being important that every man should hear all I had to say. I thought of approaching the management of Drury Lane Theatre, but hesitated risking a failure on the boards which my father had trod with such distinction. Finally I decided on the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, the acoustic properties of which are good, and where accommodation was sufficient for about 3,000 officers and men. Arrangements were therefore made for the meeting to be held at 11-30 a.m. on Tuesday, 10th June, 1919. The number of men to attend I left entirely to the superintendents, the one proviso being that if possible every man should volunteer. It transpired afterwards that the number of applications was far in excess of the accommodation of the hall.

As soon as a rumour of my intentions leaked out I was

naturally beset with applications from the press for permission to attend, which I was unable to grant, as the meeting was a purely domestic concern between myself and my men. On my arrival the hall was already packed, and as I walked on to the platform the whole audience rose in silence to their feet. Although I am rarely troubled with nervousness, I confess that as I looked at the sea of faces on the stage around me, and below in the auditorium, enveloped in an atmosphere of stony silence, I began to have qualms whether I had not undertaken a task beyond my powers of accomplishment. However, there was nothing for it but to get going, and, speaking to the men in the same tone of comradeship that I should have adopted towards the soldiers among whom I had been brought up, it was not long before I felt that the atmosphere was gradually thawing towards me. I spoke for just under two hours, my remarks being now and again punctuated by cheers from the audience.

My speech to the men was taken down in shorthand, and as it may be of interest as marking the turning-point in the struggle with the union, and epitomizing the happenings during the past nine months, I venture to give it *in extenso* :—

“Before I start what I have to say to you, I want just to mention that this is not a propaganda meeting. This is not a meeting for the press, but is simply a talk from myself to you, and of course if we had in this force a place like a large hall of our own, it would be quite a common thing for us to meet now and again. We cannot have a discussion to-day because we have not got the time. I am simply going to have notes made of my speech for my own information. One copy only will be kept. So if any of you have any reporters sitting beside you, will you kindly ask them to walk out. (Clapping.)

“Now, officers and men of the force, you know from the constitution of our force how difficult it is for us ever to see anything of one another. The most one can do, at least that is



my experience, is occasionally—and I should have done it very much more often if I had not been tied in my office—occasionally to go to a station when the reliefs are coming and going, and then one might perhaps see thirty, forty or fifty men, and that seems to me about the most that could be done, owing to the peculiar organization of this force. That is why I thought it would be a good thing to meet as many of you as I could to-day. We might have had more in a bigger hall, but then you might not have heard what I have to say, and I know that there is nothing more boring than to sit and look at somebody standing on a stage and not to know what he is talking about. There has been a good deal of talk going on lately, as we all know, and I dare say I have been painted to you, in fact I know I have, as—what shall I say?—a kind of Emperor Bill with horns on his head. I want those of you who have not seen me, just for what it is worth, to see that after all I am quite human.

“Now, men, I am going to divide what I have to say into three parts—past, present, and future. I am going to talk quite straight. There has been a good deal of straight, and not altogether accurate, talking going on during the last month, and I think it is only right that you should hear my version of it; therefore, particularly in dealing with the past, and to a lesser degree with the present, if I have to say hard things it is better so. Let us get rid of it and have done with it, once and for all.

“As regards the past we have to go back to last August, and it was then that I came first among you. Owing to the occurrences then, and I do not wish to touch upon them, more particularly because I feel that, after having been able to look into the working of this machine during the nine months I have been with you, the occurrence at the end of last August was brought about by legitimate grievances that had not been remedied. (Applause.) Let us take care what we are doing. You are all well-educated men, and you have read your history. You

remember away back in the days of Charles II, when London was a beastly insanitary, unwholesome town, which had had the Great Plague raging through it, there occurred the Great Fire of London. That was really a blessing in disguise, and from that day a new London—the London that we know to-day—took its birth. Now it seems to me that the occurrence of last August was our ‘fire of London.’ It no doubt destroyed and enabled to be remedied a good many things that required remedying, but I am quite sure you will agree with me that we do not want a fire of London every ten minutes, whenever something seems to go wrong. (Applause.)

“At the time when that incident occurred certain arrangements were entered upon between those representing the Metropolitan Police and the Government of the day, first with the Prime Minister and afterwards completed with the then Secretary of State. The main points were the increase of pay, the Representative Boards, and permission for men to join the union under certain conditions. Now that increase of pay, as it was then, was carried out very quickly, without that necessary thinking out which is the only possible means to get a matter on a satisfactory basis, and it included this war bonus, which we all know is merely temporary ; when I say temporary I do not mean to say that it is going to be taken away. It was brought in because of the war to carry through a period which was not normal. It struck me that that increase of pay was merely a temporary expedient, and that it was a matter which ought to be thoroughly looked into and investigated, very much further than it had been possible to investigate it at that moment, in order to put it on a proper footing. From that time, I do not mean to say every week, or even every month, but from that time the matter was constantly pressed on the Government to get it thoroughly sifted out and put straight.

“Nothing much was done until the end of the year, and then

by our present Secretary of State, and I can say this to you men, that I honestly believe you have no better friend in the country, or one who is more sympathetic, than our present Home Secretary. I say that from my experience of a good many Ministers. I just mention this because it has been said that it was the activities of the union that brought about this matter. Well, the old Representative Board put up to me a proposal, jogged my memory if you like, but the matter has been going on ever since that first arrangement was made in August, simply because anybody with any administrative experience could have told you that that was only a temporary expedient. Now I will touch later on this question of delay, and explain to you that which naturally many of you do not know, the cause of delay in any matter which has to go through a Government, and I assure you it would be just the same whether, whoever you like, was the head of the Government, and whatever Government was in. It does not matter who it is ; even if Mr. Pemberton Billing was Prime Minister, you would find that the Government machine could not work faster. (Applause.)

“Now about the Representative Board. When the Prime Minister told the representatives of the men that he would arrange for machinery to be set up to enable them to bring matters to a higher authority, nothing was done for several days. I think the idea was that the men’s representatives should put it up. However, they did not, and so I dictated a sort of organization which struck me as possible. That organization was talked over by the men’s representatives and the Secretary of State, and modified down to what the representatives of the men thought would be suitable, and that was carried out.

“Now, we started with this Representative Board, and I can say that I myself started out with it in all good faith, hoping and thinking that we should really make a success of it. It was something quite new to us all. We began with an absolutely virgin

mind ; at least, I did. I don't know what was at the back of the minds of some of the Board. I personally began with a virgin mind, in a matter in which I had had no experience in any administrative capacity, and was prepared to do the best I could. I suggest, if you do not get too bored with the whole subject and if you like to amuse yourselves in your station houses, that you turn up the old Police Orders of the 18th October, where you will see my address to the Board. Looking over it the other day, I was rather struck with the pitfalls that I thought might occur, looking forward from those days, and into which we most certainly have somewhat fallen.

"Now I do not want to dwell on the history of that particular Board. It was not, from my point of view, any too pleasant. From almost the very beginning I saw that the inclination of the Board was to take charge, and if you like to put it in homely language, to 'run me.' Well, in spite of being—I do not quite know what I am—a militarist, a Prussian, and everything else, I do object to being 'run' by anybody, and I think most of you men in this room would too. We have all got our own duty to do. We have all got our own ideas of how our duties should be done, and I am quite sure there are not many of us who care to be pulled this way and that by anybody who seems to have different ideas of what the right thing is. I will just read you one example of the sort of resolution that was put up to me—Resolution 189, proposed and seconded.

"This, I may tell you, was after we had had some little trouble over the Board telling me they refused to accept a certain statement that I had made, and naturally I felt, and looking back I still hold, that I was perfectly right in what I did. I did not think that the men with whom one had to deal had any right to tell me to my face practically that I was a liar, and I objected to it. ('Hear, hear,' and applause.)

“Resolution 189 ran like this :—

“In view of the fact that the Commissioner may endeavour wilfully to delay the reply of the Home Secretary until after the 6th instant, this Board do instruct its secretary to forthwith wait upon the Commissioner’s secretary, and ascertain if any reply has been received. Carried unanimously.

“This resolution was not carried into effect, as the reply was received just after the resolution was passed. That shows that I was not wasting much time, but still that shows the tone, and it became impossible to carry on.

“One other point. There has been a great deal of criticism about the alteration in the methods of these Boards, and I will tell you quite frankly what passed through my mind. I used to see the deputation of the Board, whenever they wanted to see me they would come down and have a talk. While some men were perfectly courteous towards me, as I hope I was to them, there were others who were the very reverse, and I came to the conclusion that if their attitude to me was such, what must be the attitude of the constables in the Board room to the inspectors and sergeants who were on the Board. In fact, I got it quite straight from a sergeant when I tackled him that there had been some hot air. Well, now, my way of looking at it is this, that between—I don’t care what the rank is, from myself downwards—but between the higher ranks and the lower ones, if there is hot air on matters of this kind, it will probably—and the men would be superhuman if it were not—it will probably be carried into their duties. I mean in this way : Suppose that a sergeant and a constable have a real good row across the Board table, and thoroughly lose their tempers, that sergeant would be hardly human if he clean forgot about it, and did not let it influence him in any way should he meet that man on duty. That is what I felt, and so, rightly or wrongly, I put to the Secretary of State the present organization, and from what I can see, certainly with the inspectors and sergeants, I think the ranks they represent will

find that they are doing more in their interests than under the old system. The Constables' Board is not at present what we can call an unqualified success, simply on account of its numbers, although during the last twenty-four hours I have had four more applications to join up, and may I say to you divisions who have not representatives on the Constables' Board that I suggest that you choose one in your own interests. I don't mind ; if you don't want to have one, don't have him, but there are two very important questions up before these Boards. One is a proposal I have put up for promotion which affects us all, and the other the question which I will come to later of the Provident Association.

“Now, in working a force like this, if you will only get this fairly before you, I want to work as far as may be done in unison with you. (Applause.) You think, perhaps you have been led to think, that I did all these things off my own bat. I did not do anything of the kind. I have not been doing administrative work, and administrative work on a far bigger scale than this, for a good many years to take the bit in my teeth now and do a thing like that, particularly about a matter which I cannot be said to know right down to the bottom yet, off my own bat, and therefore I hardly ever make a move in a thing that affects the force without consulting, if it is not your Board, then other people, and particularly a man who has longer service than any of you, a man, I believe, you all look up to and respect in the very highest manner—Mr. Olive. (Applause.)

“Do not think for a moment that I want to put any responsibility for my ill-doings on Mr. Olive ; not a bit. If things have gone wrong, never mind whether he suggested it or not, I take the responsibility. I think the present Boards will again be modified, and, after all, we have only been nine months at this game, and you cannot make a constitution right off that is going to be perfect. I may mention that the old Representative Board had put forward a constitution, but if that constitution had been accepted

the force would have been handed over—Commissioner, body and soul, down to the lowest constable—to the Police Union, and I was not having any. ('Hear, hear,' and applause.)

"I will just read you one extract on that point. This, mark you, is from a very prominent member of the Union, written by him :—

"There is one point which was not lost sight of, and that is that every member of the Board must be a union member, and that only union members' complaints will be considered by the Board. I know that the authorities will say that is victimization, but I will refer them to the very old saying that 'Self-preservation is the first law of Nature.'

"And it is quite true, I have felt that very proverb. Then he goes on to say :—

"We must also remember that if the higher members of the Board go against the reasonable wishes of the union while they are sitting at the Board, they render themselves liable to be expelled from the union, and thereby lose the benefit which arises from the same.

"It is very evident what was at the bottom of it, and it is my duty to protect every man in this force, whether he be in the union or whether he be not. (Applause.)

"Now I hate referring to this, but when the Prime Minister made the arrangement last August, it was clearly stated that any man could belong to the union so long as it did not interfere with the working of the force. I have never asked whether a man belongs to the union, or whether he does not ; I have tried to put such things quite aside. There may be many officers and men sitting in this room who are Freemasons. I do not want to know ; I am not one myself. There may be many men here who belong to other organizations. I am very glad they should do ; it really does not affect me. I want to say one more word : I hope to-day will be the last time I shall ever have to speak about the union at all, I want to keep out of it. But I want to point out this. In the old days, before last August, a man joined up, and

joined up no doubt in all good faith, and I am quite ready to believe that the old original starters or originators of the union, really had nothing at the back of their minds but the good of their fellow-men. I am quite ready to believe that. (Applause.) I want you to know Rule 2 under which men did join the union before August last. It is this :—

“ To use every legitimate and reasonable effort to maintain a just and impartial and efficient public service, to promote and encourage at all times the due observance of the regulations and discipline of the service, to rigidly maintain a true sense of the obligations to the public, by permanently guarding against any possibility of members withdrawing their services as a means of obtaining redress, and to have all differences between the authorities and members of the union arranged by conciliatory means.

“ That, mark you, was the old rule, and the old members I am speaking of—before August—joined up on that. In August the executive committee washed out that rule, and informed the Government that it was suspended. But now, and this is my point, the rule has been altered. The old rule was rigidly to maintain a just, impartial and efficient public service, and so on, by which it would uphold the authorities by conciliatory means. Now the wording is :—

“ And that in the event of this failing, a ballot vote of all members be taken, and services be not withdrawn unless a majority of two-thirds declare in favour of such withdrawal.

“ My point is this : that the old rule was that the men should not withdraw their services, and now they can, and the Government will not have it ; that is all I wish to say.

“ Now I have to touch on another unpleasant thing. I told you when I began that I should have to hit hard on one or two points. I have always read and followed carefully the union publication, the *Magazine*. (Applause.) I tell you honestly that I was surprised to find that self-respecting men—now I am going to hurt some men—could belong to an association whose policy was what I will read to you :—



“ It is strange how these Chief Constables’ confidential memos. get into my hands.

“ Again :—

“ One of our comrades, somewhere in England, acted as a naughty boy, and stole a letter which a Chief Constable had written to the secretary of the Chief Constables’ Association.

“ I will touch on that a moment later. It seems to me that it is hardly right that an association should publicly, by one of its chief officers, announce that policy. That a self-respecting man whose duty—our duty, mine, yours—is to guard law and order, should set such an example.

“ Another matter occurred which I have to mention. In my office, in a very responsible position in charge of what is one of the most important rooms, the telegraph office, was a sergeant. He was giving information that could only come into his possession in virtue of his being in the office and in the building, and so important was that considered by the General Purposes Committee of the union that the necessity of preserving secrecy was impressed on all members of the committee in order to protect the interests of this individual. I hardly think myself—I do not know, I am new to you, I am a new recruit—but I hardly think it is playing the game ; anyhow, we did not do that with my old lot in the Army.

“ One other point on the matter of discipline. One point that the representatives of the men made to Mr. Lloyd George in August, 1918, was that they would not interfere with discipline. I say that time and again discipline has been interfered with. I, myself, when I have been unable to see eye to eye with the men’s representatives, have been threatened time and again with the union ; in fact, in plain words : ‘ If you don’t do what I want I shall go to the union, and they will make you.’

“ Now, then, I am going to touch on another case, a case which I believe has interested you all. It certainly has interested the British Empire, the case of Spackman. It has been said that Spackman has been punished because he was a member of the

union. I give you my word of honour, I had not the faintest idea until I saw a paper in which he called himself a branch representative that he had anything at all to do with the union. The whole matter had nothing at all to do with the union. I will put it in a nutshell. There are constables sitting in this room to-day, who as years go on will be sub-divisional inspectors, will be superintendents, may even be Chief Constables, and possibly still higher up. You take my point? This case had nothing at all to do with the union—it was simply this : An order was put up, signed by a sub-divisional inspector, on the official notice board, ordering a certain thing. It was about the scrutineers, who had volunteered, asking them to attend at their place, and a constable writes on this order : ‘No action’.

“Well, I ask you, where is that going to stop? To do it in a matter like that, which I quite agree was an unimportant matter, but if it is done, well, I ask you, where is it going to stop? And knowing that there was something behind it all, and I find now, after looking back two months, that the only course to take was to stop it, otherwise no sergeant, inspector, sub-divisional inspector or superintendent would know if their orders were going to be carried out. I am going back to Spackman in a moment.

“I had another case—I will not mention the man’s name—the case of a man who very properly wrote to me, and asked, signing himself Branch Secretary I think it was, whether he might raise subscriptions for union men in his division who were leaving the force. My reply was that I regretted I could not give permission to that, or any similar application which would cause dissension or victimization in the force. He got into trouble for it, and came before a Discipline Board. The Discipline Board made him a fair offer. If he would retract and promise not to do it again, they would deal with him leniently. He did not see his way to do that. He appealed to me. I waited a week in order to give him time to think and I don’t mind telling you I thought he

might have a talk with his wife. I suppose he has got a wife. I thought he would talk to her. Women are very useful sometimes, and when it comes to a question like that of the future they often give quite sound advice. The fact was that he came to see me in a week and accepted the offer, and there he is to-day with a reprimand and transfer.

"Now I am going back to Spackman. I suppose there are some men in this room who are friends of Spackman. (Cries of 'Yes.') Good ; I will make you a sporting offer. (Applause.) I am not going to overlook it, and what I am going to say is not because I am afraid of the union. You may have found that out by this time. (Applause.) What I am going to say is simply and solely because I want to leave no stone unturned that after to-day we may enter into a new day, which will carry us on for many years to come. (Applause.) Now, I make this offer to Spackman, and before doing that I will just read you this. Carry yourselves back to August last. A paper is now in existence, signed by the men's representative last August, Police-constable Marston.

"It is notified that there will be no objection to a member of the force joining the National Union of Police and Prison Officers, so long as such union does not claim or attempt to interfere with the regular discipline of the service, and in the event of a breach of this condition members of the force may be called upon to sever their connection with such union.

"Now this union does not claim to attempt to interfere with the regular discipline of the service. The Spackman case was a case of the discipline of the service. What was behind Spackman was the union, and therefore I take Police-constable Marston at his word. If Spackman likes to come to my office any day before 12 noon on Saturday of this week—it is no use dragging out the agony—I will allow him to be re-enrolled in the force. (A Voice : 'You're a sport!' and prolonged applause.)

"Now, men, don't make any mistake. I said re-enrolled, not

reinstated. Now listen ; he committed, in my opinion, practically an unpardonable offence—an offence which we cannot pass over until, and unless, we see that he is really out to ‘ play the game ’ by the oath he took on joining. (‘Hear, hear,’ and applause.) I say that if he comes to me, to my office, this week, if he tears up his union ticket under the arrangement made by Marston, if he signs the conditions, which will be what I am saying now, and I will sign them, he shall re-enrol in the force on the rates paid to a newly joined constable. (Cries of ‘No,’ groans, etc., and ‘Order, please.’) Wait a minute. On the rates of pay of a newly enrolled constable. At the end of one year, providing I see that he plays the game and gets a good report, I will reinstate him. (Cries of ‘Hear, hear,’ and applause.) Mind you, men, now don’t let us make any mistake ; by Saturday noon, leaving the union, re-enrolled as a new man, and he will get good pay under these new pay conditions, and at the end of one year—and I will add one thing, it will be better for him, so that there will be no talk about the officers being down upon him, it will be better for him to transfer to another division—at the end of one year, and I will see he has a fair chance. (‘Bravo !’ and applause.) I shall call for a report on his conduct, and if his conduct has been exemplary the re-enrolment will be washed out and exchanged for reinstatement. (‘Hear, hear,’ cheers, and prolonged applause.)

“Now, then, let us get rid of that. I have still got a disagreeable part to get over, what to me is the most disagreeable part, and that is talking about this union. I told you that it hurt me, not personally, I don’t care a blow. I was there in Trafalgar Square, but it hurt me to think that I belonged to a force that held that demonstration. I could not imagine the men of the Army, whom for thirty-seven years I had served with and fought with, lived with, and had been prepared, if you like, to die with ; I looked back, and I could not see those men doing that—carrying

a banner trying to hold up their Chief, right or wrong, to ridicule in public. I have no personal feelings in the matter at all, for I did not come to this force for any personal reasons, but I did not like the idea of—what shall I say?—washing our dirty linen in public. (Applause.) And then I do not like men belonging to this great force, belonging to an association which on a late occasion apologized to the public for men doing their duty, and doing it damned well. (Applause.)

“About the occasion of that demonstration at Westminster, do not make any mistake, they talk about that demonstration being of discharged soldiers. I know a soldier when I see him. I saw some of them myself. There were soldiers there, and a good many of them well-behaved men, but there were, as there must be in every kind of demonstration like that, a whole lot of dirty ragamuffins—men who cannot speak English, men whose only idea is, mark you, to get this country of ours into the same state as theirs. (Applause.) I was glad to see that the action of the union was in certain quarters repudiated by you men. (Applause.) Now, I do not want to dwell on this matter, but I must, in fairness to myself and to you, if we are to start afresh, touch on several points here which are absolutely personal. You have been told things by these men, and of course I am not going to have an argument in the press with anybody, much less with the union, and therefore it is only to my own men in a room like this I can speak up quite frankly on a personal matter, the last matter on which I should wish to speak, but things have been said.

“One of their biggest flags has been militarism and Prussianism. Right. When I first came to your force, I want you to understand that I had been dealing with discipline for many years, in the Old Army and the New, where we had to assimilate our discipline to the class of men we might get ; it could not always be the same, one never tried to keep it the same. Before I was with you a week a case was brought into my office of a man who was

fined three shillings a week for two years. I called in Sir Frederick Wodehouse. I said to him : 'What is this?' and he said : ' It is the custom of the service.' ' Well,' I said, ' I think it is the most barbarous punishment I have ever seen.' (Applause.) I asked him if he had been in the hands of a money-lender. He told me that he had not. Well, when I was young I was. (Laughter.) And it seemed to me, looking at a punishment like that, that after eight or nine months, when a man would get up in the morning feeling more or less merry and bright, then he would suddenly think : ' My God, I have got another year or more of that damned thing.'

"From that moment I made up my mind that the punishments had got to be reviewed. As you know, they have been revised. We will see how the present scheme works. It has been worked out very carefully by your own people, men like yourselves, and we will try the new code, which is certainly more merciful, on the lines that if a man does wrong give him a whack and have done with it.

"Now there are two classes of discipline cases, and you may call me a Prussian, or anything you like, I don't mind. One is absolute and direct disobedience to orders. That we cannot put up with. You men, and as I said just now there are men among you who I hope will rise to the highest ranks ; you officers and higher ranks, how can you carry on unless orders are carried out to the letter? There is no half-way house, no quarter-way, orders are orders. If the order is wrong and oppressive, carry it out ; but then put in, I will not say a complaint, but bring the matter to a higher authority, and you have never yet found you cannot get through to my office.

"Then about the other class, we have had lately several cases of leaving beats, and I want to tell you quite frankly and straight what I think about that, and why I think it is such a serious matter. We are all of us paid by the public, and one of the things we are

paid for is to allow the public to go to sleep at night with their wives and families and know that the man in blue is outside looking after them. (Applause.)

“You know that as well as I do, and any of you who are readers will find some most interesting stuff written on the social side of countries after a great war. It has always been the same, after the Peninsula, after the Crimea, to a small degree after the Boer War, and now. The reason is that large bodies of men come back from the war, where there was no civil law, where their only law was military discipline, and their orders were generally to do their best to kill the men they were trying to beat. You know perfectly well that before these men went off to the war, when they saw you in your uniform on the corner of the street they would say : ‘ Here’s a bobby, we had better get out of his way,’ but after the war, mark you, it is not the same, and it will not be the same, until what we call the ‘ Majesty of the Law ’ has reasserted itself. You may have already found out to-day that you are not looked upon by the returned soldier with the same awe as he looked upon you three or four years ago. It is ordinary human nature ; it has always been and always will be. The result is that crime and burglaries will be more frequent. The man who before the war burgled, and when he heard a noise scuttled off, or if somebody came down tried to get away, he may be a man who for four years has been taking other men’s lives, and he will think nothing of taking another man’s life. If, therefore, a policeman wilfully withdraws himself from his beat, and leaves the wretched householder, or the public, or the warehouse unprotected, I say that man is not fit to be a policeman. (‘Hear, hear,’ and applause.) There, if you like, are my two instances of Prussianism, and I intend to be a Prussian in these two instances as long as I am here. (Applause.) Beyond that I will defy anybody to produce any other case of what you may call militarism.

“Now, then, let us take welfare and comfort. A good man

from the City Police—I never could make out why the City Police want to interfere in our affairs—got up in Trafalgar Square, and one of his examples of my militarism was that I intended to form messes. Now the story of that is this. I had been very much struck in going round your station houses, the few I have been able to go into, very much struck with the discomfort and cheerlessness, compared with what Army barracks, pre-war Army barracks, were. It struck me as awfully cheerless and uncomfortable. (Applause.) That, I may say, I am on the way to remedy.

“ Now about food—the breakfasts and teas. As far as I can make out, the dinners are looked after by the women cooks. There is no particular system, especially with the early breakfast for the single man. I made a remark in going round a station house one day. I said to a man : ‘I suppose you do what I used to do when I was little boy at school, stick a sausage on a broken pen and hold it over the gas.’ Well, it was uncomfortable, and I thought at the time it would be a very good thing if we could have some sort of proper mess where men could have their early or late food properly cooked, and this would be better for their health and comfort generally. (Applause.) That, if you please, was twisted by Police-constable Zollner into militarism. Well, I hope there will be more of it. (Applause.) Now, then, another thing about militarism was about the officers. Well, I do not think much can be said about that. Soon after I came Sir Frederick Wodehouse left the force. I wanted somebody who understood something about organization, who understood something about the comfort of men, and the welfare of men, and who also knew something about police work. I found a man whom I happened to know, who had had a very large experience in police work, in civil police and military police, and in the Army. He came, and has been of very great assistance, though perhaps some of you do not know him, and that is General Horwood. (Applause.)



“As regards the Chief Constables. As you know, for the first time in the history of the force, two men who rose straight from the ranks have been made Chief Constables. (Applause.) I will say, standing here, that I had ideas when I first came here, the first month or two, but by experience those ideas have been modified, and I will now say this, that should any vacancy occur for a Chief Constable in this force, I intend to promote from the ranks. (‘Hear, hear.’) Now, that is all I could find out about Prussianism. I have another note here; we had better get it out. It is Prussianism on the other side. One of the things that I am proudest of since I came to you was that by a bit of luck I came across a man whom I was able to save, and get back to the force—a man who had got a bit disgruntled with things in general. He was taken for the Army, but he was, in my opinion, treated—well, I will say very foolishly. He was a man belonging, in the old days, to one of the finest regiments in the Army, and instead of getting to a decent regiment they tried to post him to something that was the reverse. The old soldier felt it, and I should have felt it too. He then became an objector—I will not say conscientious or moral, I will say objector—and while he was in the Army he got into trouble, and got into prison on account of it. Through a bit of luck I was able to work it through, and to get that man out. He went into the Military Police, and would have gone to France if the war had lasted. I had a report from Aldershot that that man was the best military policeman they had had during the whole course of the war.

“I naturally took an interest in him, and I sent for him to have a chat in my room, and we talked about the Army and different things, but nothing that could not have been talked about in this hall. I am informed that he was called upon by the executive of the union to say what passed between him and me. I rather think I should have given the same answer as he did: ‘It was my own private affairs, and be damned to you.’

Anyhow, my point is, coming back to Prussianism, I think the man was kicked out of the union, though that was a private conversation, and, mark you, I was not his Commissioner then. He was in my old corps of Military Police, in which I served for some years. It seems to me that that is a little hot, isn't it? (Laughter.)

"Now I want to get over this disagreeable bit as quickly as I can. There is a little bit more of it. I want to read you men this. It is what was said by one of the Metropolitan Police in Trafalgar Square :—

"Perhaps it will interest you to know the Commissioner of Police, what type of man he is. He was sent to Ulster before the war as the only man they could depend upon to smash the Irish rebellion. Comrades, are you going to stand this man?—and so on!

"He is absolutely militarist to the bottom of his boots.

"I can only say this, and there are men in this room who can bear me out: I was sent to Ulster because the Government thought I should be able to keep the peace, and prevent bloodshed, because they remembered the day when you Metropolitan Police, twelve hundred of you, enabled me to carry through that South Wales strike without firing a shot; they thought I might be able, having done that, to do it in Ulster. (Applause.) Now, men, who said that? That was Sergeant Lakey, who stole information out of my office. (Cries of 'Shame!' etc.)

"Now then, one more, and one only. The organizing secretary, Mr. Thiel, at Trafalgar Square :—

"Can you get on with Sir Nevil Macready as your Commissioner? ('No!' outright.)

"Well, you have got to try. Thiel went on :—

"I think I always told officers when I was training them that the first thing was to get the respect of their men, and the second to be an officer and a gentleman. ('Hear, hear.')

"Yes, quite true, the sentiment was admirable, but did the speaker follow it up in his own line of life, by being the naughty

boy who stole from the Chief Constable's table? No! I only tell you that, men, I am sorry to rub it in, but I tell you that this is the class of man he is, and it is for you to choose between him and me. Now, then, we are right through that.

"Then there was a talk about machine guns and tanks. (Laughter.) There was a talk that I wanted a strike. Good God! nobody has had more to do with strikes, as you know, than I have, and don't I know what it means? Don't I know what it means to wives and children? Didn't we, some of us, see it in South Wales? Didn't we, in the big railway strike, see how they nearly starved on account of it? No, I did not want it. What I did want was to get through with this business, and get out into the open by some means or other. Tanks and machine guns! Well, as I told you just now, you, some of you, and I got through in South Wales—it was pretty bad—without even using cartridges. I think, if I remember rightly, we did use our bayonets, and there was some difficulty in sitting down on the part of certain people. (Laughter.)

"I will tell you exactly what the military arrangements were. It had been rubbed in that there was going to be a strike. I did not believe it, but still I should have been a fool, and you would have thought me a fool, if I had sat down and done nothing. The point was, I knew, I was sure, that if there was a strike a very large proportion of the men would stand firm. (Applause.) I did not want those men who stood by their oaths to be mewed up in their station houses. I wanted them to get out and about their work as far as could be done; therefore, if it became a question of being shut up and besieged in their station houses, I had made arrangements that there should be some military who could take over the station houses, and simply hold them, to enable our men to get out and do their work outside. I tell you quite straight, that that was the whole of the tanks, the machine guns, and the militarism.

“ ‘Guards were moved up to London.’ That is not true, there were none. A statement was made that I prevented Police-constable Marston from going to Paris in an aeroplane. I tell you honestly, I wish to goodness he had gone. (Laughter.) What I know about it was this. One evening I was rung up by the Superintendent of “J” Division, and told that Police-constable Marston had been in to say that he was going to Paris. Well, I did not know what he might be doing, so I did not do anything. Next morning I rang up the Superintendent of “J”, and asked him what was doing, and he said all was well, and the constable was on beat.

“One other point, and that is that a member of Parliament has been rather conspicuous in his activities with our force lately. He said to, I think I am right in saying the Secretary of State himself, or one of the other people in the Home Office, that he knew for a fact that I had the names of fifteen hundred men of the union I intended to get rid of. I tell him to his face ‘he is a liar’. (‘Hear, hear,’ and applause.) I told you what my policy with the union has been all along, and it is true. I have never asked whether a man has belonged to the union. I do not believe at this moment that I could write down the names of twelve men that I know who belong to it, and every man’s name would be one of those who have forced the fact upon me. It is no business of mine, and never will be.

“Now, one point, and this an important one too. You have heard it said, many of you men here heard it in the park, you were told that a letter had been sent from the Prime Minister to, I think, the General Secretary, Mr. Hayes, saying that he could take no action at present, or something like that. Now, then, I hold in my hand a letter from Paris, from the Prime Minister’s own secretary. He says :—

“ With reference to the message which is supposed to have been sent from the Prime Minister to the union, there has been no communication of any kind whatever from here.

And again :—

“ There has been no message sent to the men themselves, or to Mr. Pemberton Billing.

“ So that is another lie which was told. I only tell you these things so that you may know the facts.

“ One other point, and then we have done, and that is conscientious objectors. That has been thrown up in my face. I have told you the story of one conscientious objector, a man I am proud to have back in the force, and one who is a first-rate man at his duty. But the man Herbert, whose name we have heard, had he thought fit, when he was in the Army, to have done the same thing as the other man, to have fought for his country, or to have said he would, I should have treated him in exactly the same way. I tell you, men, there are two points of view about conscientious objectors. Many of you, I am certain, feel with me. I was not in the trenches. My position did not enable me to be there, but I was in France for two years. Every male in my own family, and there are not many of them, was there. One of them was buried, and I feel very strongly from a personal point of view. I don't care what a man's political feelings are. It is his duty as a citizen to, if necessary, lay down his life for his country. (‘Hear, hear,’ and applause.) If everybody had been a conscientious objector we should not have been in this hall to-day, and I think you would have been having a very funny time with Emperor Bill. (Applause.)

“ Now the other point, and that is more important. What I have just said is simply a personal matter. Some of you may feel with me, and some of you perhaps do not see it from the same point of view. But I know something about men and their ways, and I am sure if we had, let me say, even one conscientious objector among us in the street, it would go round. We know how these things spread. A day might come when we might have bother with a certain section of people in London ; it does not

matter who, and we should have 'So-and-so' among us, a conscientious objector. When you might be having very difficult duties in the street, perhaps rioting, the cry would be raised : 'Down with the Conchies,' meaning the police, and if that happened there would be bloodshed. That is my reason for being unable to take back a man who thought that way. And now that finishes that.

"Whereas we had a procession to Trafalgar Square, and we had a meeting in Hyde Park, we had, thank God, the march down Whitehall to the memorial service where London saw its police and was proud of them, and saw what they really were, and I tell you, men, I am more than proud that that took place. It was a sight anybody could be proud of.

"Now, I want to turn to your own position, and I cannot do better than to read you a few words from a speech made the other day in the House of Commons about 'What is a policeman? What is the police force?'

"It is not a military relation, it is not strictly a civil relation, it is a unique relation. The policemen are the summary arbiters on difficult questions, whether it be a man's alcoholic state or a woman's honour. They have to decide, and their decision is very often final. You go into a court of law, and you find a woman branded by the police as a prostitute. Because the police say so we believe it. The police are the arbiters as to whether a man is in the condition that is known as drunk. The liberty of the subject is entirely in the hands of the police. They have the right of arrest, and there is no redress to the subject. The policeman makes a charge and gives his opinion, and that man or woman's future is entirely damned supposing that opinion be correct. On the other hand, many a man and many a woman have been saved by the friendly attitude of the police. I know of many cases where superior police officers have given a man or woman a chance, and the same is equally true of the ordinary police-constable. That is what you ask of the police. You must demand a high standard of honour and integrity from the police, and it is sometimes quite a judgment. Very often a police opinion is a thing which determines whether or not a prosecution is to be promoted. This is a tremendous thing to ask a man."

"The Home Secretary is more than sympathetic, and urged that the force should be paid in accordance with its duties and responsibilities. Now, men, do not make a mistake about this. Whatever Government is in, it does not matter who he is, whether it is Mr. Lloyd George, whether it is Mr. Bonar Law, whether it is Mr. Smillie, or whether it is Mr. Pemberton Billing, it is all the same. Whatever Government is in, the police are its servants. We take the obligations, and we are its servants. We have to carry out the orders of the Government of the day. The day will come, I think myself it will not be very far off, but it will come, when there will be a Labour Government, the same as you have in other countries. (Applause.) It is a great political force, and I have met in the Cabinet in days gone by, when I was more often there than I am now, many a Labour Minister, and we shall find that there will not be such wonderful changes with a Labour Government in. You will find that a Labour Government will expect you to do your duty by them, which is exactly the same as the Government of to-day.

"Every policeman accepts certain responsibilities. You all came into this force voluntarily; in fact I think, as I have said on more than one occasion, that out of our twenty thousand men there is only *one* who did not come in voluntarily, and that man is speaking to you. You all knew what you were doing. You all took it up, and you took certain responsibility, and in return for that the Government gave you certain advantages. The ordinary man who goes to work in the factory makes his arrangements with his employer as to wages, etc. The factory may go down, or the factory may go up. Now you cannot be unemployed. The Government says to you: 'You accept certain conditions, and certain responsibilities, and we in return guarantee you against unemployment. We guarantee you, when you have done your years' work, that you will have a pension, and it is an early pension, and in a good many cases

you will be able to supplement it.' These are two great advantages which one must remember. Your employer does not make one penny out of your work. I am not your employer, it is the Government. Suppose we were all in a jam factory, all the money to a certain point would go into the owner's pocket. Whatever we do the Government does not make a penny ; we are not like the engineer, the bootmaker, or whoever it may be. We are all free, and if we do not like the job we can, as was mentioned in Trafalgar Square, 'pick up our hats and go,' or go without them. (Laughter.)

"I have seen a great deal in the papers lately about the way in which the great trade unions were behind, I will not say the police, but the Police Union ; but don't forget this, unless they are most extraordinarily self-denying people they are not going to back you for all they are worth without expecting that you are going to back them. Therefore, it seems to me, the position may be this : Supposing an 'unfortunate occurrence' had happened with the backing of the big trade unions, and then things had settled down for a few weeks ; then a day might come when some of these big labour organizations had a reason for striking, and of course we all know what occurred in 1906. It might be a matter in which you are not interested, it might be coal-miners. You would be interested in this way, that you could not get coal, and your wives and families might be freezing. You might not agree with the reasons put up by the miners, you might think they were wrong, but they who had backed the Police Union before would certainly say : 'Come on, you have got to do your bit.' I assure you, we believe our duty to stand outside that. We take our obligations, we are in the service of the Government, whether they are Whig, Tory, or whatever you like.

"Now let us pass into the present—the Government proposals as to pay. I cannot give you them. I don't know them myself. What I know about it is this, the minimum is not going to be less



than what Mr. Shortt said, £3 10s. pensionable pay. In addition to that they are going into the question of this wretched housing—a question which I assure you gives me more food for thought than anything else. I know how you fellows are handicapped and uncomfortable by the difficulty in getting decent houses. It is the same all over the country ; but I have nothing to do with the rest of the country, I am only concerned with you. It seems almost impossible to get on the right lines just now, but this is one of the great issues that the Committee are going into.

“Then the several allowances. Their idea is to try and make the pay a fairly inclusive sum, without a lot of fiddling little allowances. (‘Hear, hear,’ and long applause.)

“These are lines they are working on, and I want to say this word to you because I know there are men here, in front of me, who say : ‘Why the devil don’t they get on with it?’ Now I know something about Governments, and what goes on behind the scenes. Those men here, particularly those from my office, may think it is an easy matter to set up a Committee. You may think it is as easy as it is for me to do. You know, if I have a little matter, as I told you earlier, I never do anything important without consulting my Chief Constables and so on. If I just want to get to the bottom of something I say : ‘We will have a little committee, Mr. Olive in the chair, and two superintendents.’ The thing is done next day, and if I say, ‘I should like to have your report in a week,’ the thing is done. It is a little thing, but you cannot do that with the Government.

“The Secretary of State makes up his mind to have a Committee on this matter. Remember he has got, first of all, to find out what kind of people to put on it. It is no good putting on people who have no sympathy with the thing. It is no good putting on a man who is already on a committee. He has got to see whether they can do it, because don’t forget, though after all our Metro-

politan Police looms big in our eyes, and though we have twenty thousand men, they are a very small drop in the ocean of the Empire. These men in Parliament have got hundreds of other things to do. I know that for this Committee, man after man was tried, and it was found that he was too busy, or that he was sitting on other Committees, and there were more difficulties.

“Then you get your Committee fixed up say on a Saturday. You can hardly expect them to sit in their shirt-sleeves at 9 o’clock on Monday morning, and never get up until it is done. They have other things to do, their duties in Parliament, to their constituents, a hundred and one other things. This Committee has already examined about two hundred witnesses, they had me there for about two hours and a quarter. Well, it takes time, and when they get through, the report of the Committee has got to go to the Cabinet. Well, the Cabinet has got this enormous peace question. You must trust me that there will not be an hour wasted that I can help. I know Mr. Shortt is of the same way of thinking. That is the way these things seem to drag out. It is the ordinary Government machine. I know very well there are very clever people who think if they were at the head of the Government they could do things differently; still, they might, and they might not.

“I tell you, men, you cannot possibly get on beyond a certain point. I tell you this to explain to you that there has not been any actual delay. Now, this Whitsun, what is happening? This Police Bill, which has got to go through—well, our old friends in Parliament having gone away for three weeks, and I dare say they deserve it (I have not had three weeks’ leave for eight years), but they go away on leave, and so we have to wait a little bit longer, but, believe me, it will be got through, and got through quickly. (‘Hear, hear,’ and applause.)

“Now the Provident Fund. Here I know again that the union take flattering unction to their soul of having started the

new idea of the Provident Fund. They are not quite correct, but I saw in the *Magazine* that this was so. But long before that I saw that this Provident Fund which has been going on since 1892 is a dangerous thing. The mere fact that it depended entirely on the goodwill of the men was unsatisfactory, and I was quite surprised myself to find that it had gone on so well. Then a step was taken, which I am bound to say, from the union point of view, was quite wise. They said : 'Look here, anybody who does not belong to the union will not subscribe to this.' Their idea was patent. 'Look here, if you do not join up, you will not get any 'baksheesh' at the end of your twenty-five years.' Well, I assure you, I had no end of representations from men really asking me for protection. I said : 'Until we can get something done, I tell you straight, in your place I should go and join up,' because, after all, forty or fifty pounds is a sum we all look at before losing. The new conditions have been complicated to draw up. It is simply a proposal put forward by one of the great assurance companies, and the Representative Board are going to have a real good dig at it. If they do not like it we will try something else. I am not going to try and shove anything down your throats, particularly a matter like this, which is really entirely your own business, but I do feel that this ought to be put on some sort of firm basis. (Applause.)

"Now, I told you just now that there is only one man in this force who did not come in voluntarily. Well, don't think I am not glad to be with you, but the story is this, and you may just as well have it. On that eventful Saturday at the end of August I was sent for, and told that the Prime Minister wished me to take this thing over, the same old game I suppose, like going to Ulster. (Laughter.) I don't know ; anyhow, I did not want to come at all, and frankly I was then in a position where I thought I was doing some good. I thought I should be more useful where I was in the interests of the New Army, and, mind you, I have

not had three weeks' holiday since 1910, on end, and one gets a bit tired. I also felt—well, I was not particularly anxious to go on working until I got into a bath-chair.

“We argued the point for over two hours, and in the end I was told that to come to you was in the interests of the country, and then I had nothing more to say. I tell you this, that if I had to make a change from the War Office where I was Adjutant-General at that time, I would rather have come to you, difficult as it was, and difficult as it has been. I would rather have come to you, because I knew this force, and I and the country owe it an unending debt of gratitude for what you did for me in South Wales. ('Hear, hear,' and applause.) It was your twelve hundred men who really saved the situation, who really prevented lives being lost. We had other police, but I will leave the thing for your older men to tell you about. Thank God we got out of it, and, as you know, it was not a comfortable time ; we were not altogether unpopular, and there, during those three months, I got to know some of the Metropolitan Police, and I always had a very high opinion of them, and when this came I was glad I should have come to you and not be sent off to put, well, Asia Minor right. I did not come here for my own ends. I get nothing out of it whatever. I see some gentlemen have talked to you about pensions. I don't secure a pension, not one farthing, all the time I may be with you. I finished that the day I left the Army.

“One other thing you talk about. I think some of you in the Commissioner's office will know how things have altered. I take no credit for that, except this, that I have had some experience of various Government departments, and how they are worked, and how difficult a thing it is. Now, I think it has been said, and I have no doubt that the day will come : 'Why should not a policeman be put in as Commissioner?' I was talking to our old friend Mr. Olive, and I said, 'My dear Olive, here is

this chair. For God's sake get into it, if you like.' Well, Mr. Olive was not for the moment able to take it, and I think a tremendous lot of Mr. Olive. I will tell you why Mr. Olive could not tackle that very job. I will tell you why the Commissioner's job has little to do with the ordinary police detail. Three-quarters of his job is to get things done, and done as quickly as possible in the interests of his men in various Government departments, Home Office, Treasury, our own Receiver, and I don't know what else. It does not come into the ordinary course of work to anybody, right up to a Chief Constable, and that is why I only say that the day *may* come when you may have a Commissioner who comes from the ranks. We are getting on that way, but it will take years, for this reason. We have got Chief Constables now from the ranks, and well they are repaying their promotion. ('Hear, hear,' and applause.) The next step is to get up a bit higher and get experience as Assistant Commissioner. A Chief Constable, going from Chief Constable to Assistant Commissioner, will find that the work is absolutely different. He comes into quite a new atmosphere, and when you get higher up again, in that room of mine, you will find the atmosphere again quite different. I dare say there are people walking about their beats who think they could do it very well. I dare say, let them try, I will make way, and go for two months to the South of France. There would be plenty of work for me when I came back.

"There are two little points I want to speak about to finish up the present, and the future will not take three minutes. One is, I want to ask you to look with a more kindly eye upon the Special Constabulary. I know perfectly well that the idea has got about that the specials are there for, I believe some people say, strike-breaking. It is all damned nonsense. You have only got to look at some of them. (Laughter.) Now, men, just try and be a little generous. What did these men do four years ago? Four years ago we were straining every nerve to get on with this war. Last

March was the most anxious time I had during the whole course of the war. I had to find men for the Army, anywhere I could, and it was touch-and-go. These special constables, what did they do? They came forward. They were not men who were any use at the front, except perhaps some of the tribunal exemptions. They honestly came forward, without pay, to do what they thought and hoped was their bit, to help you fellows, some of you, to get off to the front, and I know I am right in saying that those who did go to the front were glad to have gone. The specials did their best, anyhow. Anyway, the specials are going to be demobilized. They are going to be disbanded directly, but it is proposed to form a reserve. I want to get quite straight with you men. Don't let there be any damned nonsense getting into your heads that this reserve is being formed as a kind of strike-breaker. No more strikes for me, thank you ; I have finished. We will put that conclusion out of our heads. You and I are not going to have too easy a time in carrying out our work during the next year or two.

"I go back to what I said at the beginning about what has happened after every great war. We have got to get through it, and we shall take a year or two to get through it. Supposing we do get into considerable trouble, and there is rioting and that sort of thing. Supposing we can get a reserve of loyal, hefty fellows, who will really be of assistance to us, and prevent our having to call upon the military. Is not that a good thing? ('Hear, hear,' and applause.) It strikes me as sound, because with men like that, instead of having to keep you fellows on duty day in and day out, if we can get some thousands of these men who are really useful, you will be able to get some hours off ; and this, I tell you honestly, is all I am looking at in this matter. We will not use them except on ceremonials, when if they like to come out and wear their medals they can do so. (Laughter.) So much of a militarist am I that I want to do all I can to prevent calling out the

military, because it is a bad thing to do, and because I know what the officer and soldier feels when he is called out. I have been in that position, and it is about the most beastly position in which to be ; so don't let us have any mistake about the special constables.

"The present special constables have done the force many a good turn, and really, in talking to them, and I go sometimes to dine with them, they really, honestly, will only be too glad to take your hand in both theirs.

"And the last point of the present is the inevitable female. (Laughter.) In the *Magazine*, which I read with interest, I saw a very learned article by a certain writer, rather crabbing the Women Police. Well, men, give them a trial. They were invented by me, as you know, and, after all, one of the great things we militarists have thrust in our faces is that we do not move with the times. There is a certain class of social disability which I think these women could probably tackle as well as the men. I don't think—I tell you honestly—I don't think it is quite the thing for a full-blown constable to go and stir up ladies and gentlemen lying about in the parks. It had far better be done by the Women Police.

"Anyway, it is an experiment. There was an idea in the country that it should be done, and I thought : 'Let us try it.' We have only got a hundred, and we will try it for a year and see if it turns out to be a farce. If it does they can go back, but in order to try the experiment they must have a fair run for their money. I think among them there are two or three or more constables' wives, who are doing very well. Let us give them a run for their money, and don't let us stick ourselves on a pedestal and think that nothing can be improved and that everything must be the same as in the past. I tell you, men, frankly, that, democratic as you may be, I have never struck such a conservative show in the whole of my life, and you see, quite unfortunately for you, I am rather moving in the forward direction, and trying experiments. I

started the W.A.A.C.'s in the Army, and our conservative people nearly had a fit. I am a great believer in trying experiments. If they are wrong, well, hang it all, one is never ashamed to say that it is a mistake. We will do our best, and if it is not a good thing we will put it away.

“Now for the future. When the Government bring forward their Bill, which, as I say, will be after Whitsun, I will guarantee to worry them until we get it through.

“And here let me repeat to you what the Government proposals, and their Representative Board proposals, are in rough. It is called by Mr. Shortt ‘The Association.’ It may be a federation or association, I don’t know what the name is. The association will be really representative of the police. Every policeman will have a voice in the election of the delegates. It will be representative of all, not of one individual force. There will be provisions for the forces and all their representatives conferring, whether in districts or for the whole country. There will be provisions by which the newest-joined constable can have any grievance of his taken, as a right, to the highest authority in the land, and we hope by that means to have a body amongst the police which will really represent them upon a thoroughly sound democratic basis, elected and controlled by themselves, fully representative of themselves, and with full power to bring any grievance or aspiration they may have to the highest authority in the land.

“Now, these are the Secretary of State’s words in regard to his intentions in this—whatever you like to call it. (A Voice : ‘This federation.’) I saw him last night, and he told me that on Wednesday he is going to get on and start seriously on drawing up this, and he is going to consult with as many people as he can with a view to getting really something which will, at all events, start fair. We shall not get the perfect thing, mark you, to start with. You never do. Why, you remember the first days of



motors, the beastly thing you had that bucked at every hill. You cannot get satisfaction at the first go-off, but we shall get it. Now, in return, the Government, whose servants we are, say this :—

“ When this body is set up, when the pay is passed into law, when the Provident Fund has been put on a sound basis which contents the force, then the Government say, once and for all, that no policeman is to belong to a union of any sort or description, in accordance with the terms of the agreement signed by Police-constable Marston. They will be called out of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers, and they will be prohibited from belonging to any union of any kind at all.

‘ Now, this question was put to the Secretary of State : ‘ What was to be the attitude of the Government, assuming that the members of National Union of Police and Prison Officers voted against the establishment of the Board, and so on ? ’ Mr. Shortt replied : ‘ They will cease to be policemen. They cannot be both. This is a free country ; they are not obliged to be policemen. If they like to be industrial trade unionists they can be ; if they like to be policemen they can be, but they cannot possibly be both. ’ (Cheers and clapping.)

“ Two minutes more only. Let us now, when for the last time we have talked about this thing, talk no more of threats on either side. Let us have done with it, men, once and for all. Try, I ask you, try the experiment. I told you I was a great believer in experiments, try the experiment of playing up to the Government, and to the man you have been told is a Prussian and a militarist. (Cheers, long and continued applause.)

“ I do not ask you to give me a chance : I don’t ask it of you ; I don’t want it, but I ask you to give yourselves a chance. (‘ Hear, hear, ’ and applause.) Believe me, the Government intends to do what is right, and just and generous by you. You can take that honestly from me, no nonsense, no second thought behind it ; and they also (the Government) are quite determined that they, and

they alone, are going to control the police force of the country, which, after all, is the great shield of the Government of the day, be it Labour, Liberal, or whatever it is, against lawlessness and lawbreakers.

“Now, let me give you a bit of advice. I want you to read the papers. There is too much of people taking in one paper and reading that. There was the old lady who always read *The Daily Telegraph*, and she thought that anything in other papers must be wrong because it was not in *The Daily Telegraph*. I assure you, men, I am speaking from experience, for I read the whole of the papers practically which touch on any police matter. If you read any particular class of paper, giving your own political opinions, it does no harm to read the other side of the case, and it gives you a so much broader view. Take *The Daily Herald* if you like. (Applause.) I say *The Herald*, and I will tell you why, because the other day after a statement in the House on the question of this pay, and on the Provident Fund, and on recognition *The Herald* commented by putting in non-recognition, but it never mentioned the pay and the Provident Fund, and I tell you the man who reads *The Herald only* would be quite in ignorance of anything to do with pay and the Provident Fund. Therefore read as many papers as you can on police matters, and then you get a sound idea of the real feeling of the country. I assure you it is most useful. Do you read *John Bull*? If not, read it. (Laughter.)

“From this day—I would say to you, to finish up—from this day do let us play the game, and play up to our employers, the State. And, after all, what is the State but yourselves, you men who have used your vote at elections? Personally, I have never used my vote, and I am not going to.

“And during the hours we are on duty let us devote every nerve and effort to the efficient carrying-out of that duty. No gossip. I know quite well that lately, with all this turmoil going

on, with all this business to distract our thoughts from our proper work during our eight hours, I know it is only human nature, it is only natural that some of you should get together and have a chat on the subject, but I assure you it looks so bad. I can tell you I am not given to blushing, but I have had this put before me by comparative strangers. A lady, coming out of a theatre with her husband, walking round to the Tube saw two or three of our fellows together, and remarked: 'Is that General Macready's new idea of carrying out police work, as they always seem to be gossiping?' I don't like it, men, and I am sure you don't. We are getting out of this groove, and there will be no object for the interchange on duty of ideas and aims, during our eight hours. ('Hear, hear,' and applause.) Let us do our duty to the very best of our ability, with the old courtesy. I know the trouble of that courtesy business. Some silly people ask damned idiotic questions, but believe me, men, it is that courtesy, that carrying out of your duty, which has made this force the most talked-of police force in the world. For myself, I will only tell you this, I am out to work early and late for you. (Applause.) Solely and simply to feel when my time comes to leave you, that I have been able to do something, perhaps not much, but something towards placing this great force, to which you and I belong, on a firm basis of efficiency and contentment. (Applause.)

"The orders that I have had to issue lately, and which have been necessary, and which, I assure you, I would have enforced to the last letter, I hate them. Do you think it is a pleasure to me to issue orders threatening my own men? If you do you are making a great mistake. I know you don't. It is something absolutely new to me to do a thing like that, to have to threaten my own men. The men to whom I have been accustomed for the last thirty-six years were men who believed in their officers, and trusted in them. Remember, I am speaking pre-war. I believe their officers really did their best by them. I tell you I have

worked just as hard during the nine months I have been with you in your interests as I ever did for my old comrades. A good deal of time has been taken up with unprofitable work, because one has been hampered by the trouble of the past. If I had had all the hours I had to put in in connection with that trouble, I could have done a good deal more for you. In my office I have two placards, one inviting me to go, and the other inviting me to move on. I have no intention of doing either—('Hear, hear,' cheers, and long applause)—because I believe it is in my power yet to help you to forget the past, and to enter upon a future in which pride will be mingled with content. (Applause.) Thank you, men, that is all I have got to say.' (Cheers.)

The men then rose, and the cheers which rang through the hall when I had finished, followed by "He's a Jolly Good Fellow," told me that the game was won. I was more than repaid for the insults of the past weary months on the part of Marston, Hayes and Co. by the knowledge that I had gained the confidence of my men, and perhaps there was the suspicion of a quaver in my voice as I thanked the audience for their hearty cheers.

Three days after the meeting at the Queen's Hall ex-Police-constable Spackman came to see me. I explained to him under the terms of the agreement between the Prime Minister and Marston in the previous August he must sever his connection with the union, because he had interfered with the ordinary discipline of the force. I went on to define in detail the offer I had made at the Queen's Hall. He then asked if he might read out some notes, and produced a sheet of foolscap. After he had read a part of it I stopped him, and told him that it had been written for him by Hayes, which he did not deny. He finally refused my offer and disappeared.



## CHAPTER XIV.

AN unpleasant incident occurred about this time in consequence of which a station sergeant of the Metropolitan Police lost his life at Epsom. A drunken brawl among Canadian soldiers belonging to a camp at Epsom resulted in one of them being taken into custody by the police. Shortly afterwards a body of some 400 Canadians, armed with sticks and stones, attacked the station and rescued the soldier, killing one, and injuring thirteen, of the police. Some months later in January 1920, Lord Rosebery\* very kindly presented watches, subscribed for by the inhabitants of Epsom, to the police officers who had been injured in the affray.

A more pleasing display of Colonial exuberance occurred on 29th June, 1919, when Mr. Lloyd George, accompanied by the Dominion Prime Ministers, arrived in London after the signing of the Peace. A large body of Australians seized their Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, and carried him shoulder high to his car. He looked uncomfortable, but seemed to enjoy it. The ovation by the crowd was great, and Mr. Lloyd George must surely have felt that he had touched the pinnacle of fame as he drove off in a carriage with the King.

The Peace Procession on 19th July naturally meant a heavy day for the police, but thanks to the unruffled good temper of the vast crowds it passed off without a hitch, and the same evening I received a message expressive of His Majesty's satisfaction at the arrangements, which was at once telegraphed through the whole force.

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\* The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Rosebery, K.G., K.T. Prime Minister, 1894-1895.

All through the month of July, 1919, labour unrest was rampant throughout the country. On the night of 19th the Town Hall at Luton was burnt to the ground, while the coal strike in Yorkshire caused a good deal of anxiety in Government circles, necessitating an unending succession of conferences and committees which wasted much time and led to little result. It struck me as curious, especially about this time, that whenever there were indications of trouble the Government always rushed to the expedient of forming a committee to deal with it. Having attended a good many of such committees I formed the opinion that the outcome of their deliberations was of far less value than would have resulted from the initiative of one authority enjoying the support of the Government. Mr. Winston Churchill, in his lately published book,\* quotes a letter from Lord Fisher in which the Admiral says: "In the history of the world a Junta has never won," a truism which, if taken to heart, would often save much chaos and certainly much valuable time. But I suppose that leagues, conferences, committees, and such like became so ingrained in the political and diplomatic mind during the Great War that the habit was not easy to shake off.

On 24th July I went to Selby, in Yorkshire, to inspect a detachment of my police who were guarding the War Office magazine at that place, and on my return to London on 28th July, 1919, I found that all indications pointed to an early move on the part of the Police Union. The Police Act of 1919 was passing through the Committee stage in Parliament in spite of the efforts of its opponents. The Royal Assent was given on 15th August, 1919. Under the provisions of this Act a federation was established to be independent of any body or person outside the police service, and members of any police force were prohibited from belonging to a trade union or similar association. Further powers were taken in regard to pay, rating, and the establishment of provident funds.

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\* "The World Crisis," by The Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill, C.H.

The union were quite alive to the fact that once this Bill became law all their hopes and schemes would be dashed to the ground, and during its passage through the House had employed every artifice that lay in their power to destroy it, happily without avail, thanks in a great measure to the skill and determination of Mr. Shortt. Had the Home Office been in the hands of a weak Minister the Bill would assuredly have been mangled, a result which might have sown the seeds of untold trouble throughout the country for an indefinite time.

From the moment when the Bill had passed the Committee stage I knew that at any moment the hotheads of the union might make a last desperate throw for victory by declaring a strike, on the off chance that the Government would be frightened into coming to terms with them. The spirit of the force was, however, very different from what it had been several months before, and I felt convinced that not more than three thousand men at an outside estimate would obey the call of the union, and was prepared to carry on even if the figure reached five thousand without invoking outside assistance in the shape of the military. Recruits, too, of a good stamp, mainly officers and men demobilized from the Army, were pouring in in more than sufficient numbers. The Federation Boards, as the old Representative Boards were now called, were filling up, and there was a general atmosphere of loyalty to authority and of content throughout the force which gave me every confidence of being able to cope with any situation that might arise. Sealed orders had been sent out to all divisions, including those at the naval dockyards, to be opened on receipt of telegraphic or telephonic code words, and Sir Edward Ward had been notified that his Special Constabulary might be required in strength at short notice. Sir William Nott-Bower, the Commissioner of the City Police, was of course fully aware of all steps I proposed to take in the event of a strike.

On the morning of Thursday, 31st July, 1919, all Chief Con-



stables and superintendents were warned to be on the alert and within call till further orders. That evening I was dining with Sir W. Joynson-Hicks\* and a small party at the House of Commons, when at 8-15 p.m. a telephone message came from General Horwood at the Yard to say that at a meeting of the Police Union executive, held at Commercial Road, it had been announced that a strike would be declared until certain clauses of the Police Bill were withdrawn, that the police stations would be picketed, and that a meeting would be held at Tower Hill the next morning. It was further reported that Police-constable Marston had gone to Woolwich in a motor car, and on passing the Arsenal had shouted to the constables on duty : " All out to-night." I sent a message to Horwood to carry on on the lines we had arranged, and went to the Yard myself about an hour later, not wishing to spread alarm and despondency (a military phrase !) among our legislators by making a hurried departure. General Horwood, Colonel Laurie and myself remained in our office all that night and the following night, and derived no little amusement by calling up on the telephone every hour all the stations to ensure that every senior officer was out and about the beats to hearten up the men and drive off any union pickets who might be attempting "peaceful persuasion." By 3 a.m. 308 police officers had refused duty, and an order was then circulated calling up all officers off duty, of and above the rank of sergeant, to get busy on the streets. The strikers in the meantime were disseminating by means of men on bicycles false information regarding the numbers who had gone on strike, not neglecting to label all men who refused to be seduced from their duty with that ever-powerful epithet : " Bloody blackleg !"

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\* The Rt. Hon. Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Bt., M.P. Parliamentary Secretary, Overseas Trade Department, 1922-1923. Postmaster-General, 1923. Minister of Health, 1923-1924.

Reserves were brought up in case demonstrations were attempted in Whitehall or in the adjoining streets. A report from the City Police showed that that force was not greatly affected, Police-constable Zollner, who was one of the first to refuse duty, being followed by some sixty men. By 6 a.m., 1st August, 965 police officers had refused duty, including one inspector and twenty-eight sergeants. The nominal rolls were received at the Yard during the day, the whole of the strikers being dismissed that same afternoon, and the places of the inspector and sergeants filled by the promotion of other men. The same procedure was followed each day until the strike had exhausted itself. A slight disturbance occurred at Islington through men who had withdrawn from duty forcing their way into a station house. Mr. Olive, the Chief Constable of the district, was soon on the spot, and collecting some men drove the strikers out. On the 2nd August all men on leave were recalled to ease the duties of the men who remained loyal, and some of these men from leave joined the strikers. On the 4th August the poor misguided strikers indulged in that panacea for all labour troubles—a procession, which, starting from Tower Hill shepherded by mounted and foot police, dispersed tamely at Piccadilly Circus. A meeting was announced for 7-30 p.m. in Hyde Park, but neither Mr. Smillie nor the officials of the union who were expected to speak were present, and after waiting about for an hour the audience dispersed.

It was quite evident that intimidation in some form or another was in progress, because on 4th August one of the sergeants who had been promoted two days before to fill the place of a striker refused duty, and at a meeting at the union offices, in Commercial Road, Hayes, the general secretary, announced that “if the remainder of the police were not ‘out’ to-day measures would be taken to force them out.” After the first twenty-four hours the strike may be said to have collapsed, though the last men dribbled away up to the 6th August. The total number who refused duty

and were dismissed was 1,083. The average service of those dismissed was 9.3 years, and the average age 31.7 years.

Thus ended a strike, the consequences of which might have been far-reaching and destructive of all the principles upon which the preservation of law and order had been built up. My confidence in the loyalty and good sense of the force was more than justified when it is considered that 95 per cent. of the officers and men remained true to the obligations which they had undertaken, and resisted the threats and lying propaganda to which they were exposed, not only when on duty but in their own homes. Many of the men who had joined in the strike had little sympathy with the union, but were led away through pure moral weakness. Of the 1,083 who withdrew from duty probably not more than 20 per cent. were keen or active upholders of the union.

Apart from the loyalty and good sense of the great majority of the force, the factors contributing to the defeat of the union were the energy and resource of General Horwood, Colonel Laurie, the Chief Constables, superintendents, and other senior officers of the force, not forgetting the quiet determination of the Home Secretary. From the time I informed him on the telephone that the men had gone out on strike he left me entirely alone, without any of that fuss and worry so characteristic of Ministers during a crisis. It is certainly true that when I saw him on the Friday morning he asked me if I would like a Committee to help me, but detecting a twinkle in his eye, I too had my little joke, and told him that on the first sign of a Committee I should walk out of the Yard!

On the 2nd August, when it was evident that the strike had collapsed, an order was issued detailing the number of men who had been dismissed, and ending up as follows :—

Certain divisions have passed through the ordeal without a single police officer having withdrawn from his duty, a fact which reflects the greatest credit on all ranks. Other divisions have been less

fortunate, but the Commissioner feels deeply that it is in those divisions where a comparatively large number of men withdrew from duty that the loyalty of those who were true to their salt was most sorely tried, and is deserving of highest praise. The Commissioner wishes to convey to all ranks serving to-day his deep appreciation of their evident determination to uphold their own self-respect and the reputation of the great force to which we belong, and he can assure them that they may rely on him to prove that appreciation by an equal determination to further their interests and their welfare.

So little did the strike interfere with the life of the metropolis that on 4th August the Peace Procession took place on the Thames without any *contretemps*.

While the police strike in London had fizzled out without violence or untoward incidents, the same was not the case in other towns, especially at Liverpool, where a large proportion of the police refused duty, and where the military had to be called upon to quell the rioting, and damage to the extent of more than £100,000 resulted. I fancy the high proportion of men of the Liverpool Police who went on strike was due to the presence of many Irishmen in the force, a class of men who are always apt to be carried away by any wave of enthusiasm. During the time I was Commissioner I refused to enrol Irishmen in the force on the grounds that in their own country the Royal Irish Constabulary offered openings to any who wished to become the upholders of law and order.

No sooner was the strike over in London than I was inundated with every kind of appeal from every sort of person to reinstate the men who had been dismissed. Politicians, clergymen, business men, together with many of the gentler sex, endeavoured by making every conceivable excuse for those in whom they were interested to shake my determination. Foreseeing that this situation might arise, I had worded the order of 30th May, 1919, in such a way as to embrace every excuse that might be put forward, so that it was not difficult to reply to the appeals.

Here is a typical reply :—

The Commissioner would point out to Mr. — that he could hardly have been taken off his guard in the heat of the moment without realizing the seriousness of the step, because for two months Mr. — had been in possession of Police Order of 30th May, which clearly indicated the results that would follow any withdrawal from duty.

On one point I had quite made up my mind, that if the Government departed from the position they had taken up and, yielding to pressure, had ordered the reinstatement of a single man, that day I should have walked out of the Yard ; but so long as Mr. Shortt remained at the Home Office I had no fears on that point. My determination was in no way influenced by the personal factor, but on account of the resentment that would have been felt throughout the force, and the impossibility of differentiating between one striker and another.

I was at heart very sorry for the majority of the men who had been led away, some by terrorism, and more by the lies disseminated by Marston, Hayes, and their committee, assisted in no small degree by a portion of the press who, instead of coming to Scotland Yard to ascertain how many men had actually refused duty, published the figures given by the union, which were invented solely in order to mislead the men who remained on duty.

Here is an example :—

The head of the Battersea branch of the National Union of Railwaymen, a certain Mr. Oliver, had called his men out in sympathy with the Police Union, and finding that he was not supported by his own union was in an uncomfortable position. He came to see me with the idea that if he could persuade me to reinstate the dismissed men he would be able to retire gracefully from the awkward position he had got himself into. He acknowledged that he had been misled by the false reports spread by Hayes and the union, who told him that 5,000 police were out on 3rd August. I could not give the poor man much comfort beyond

telling him that while I would not reinstate a man I would not stand in the way of their getting other employment, and would indeed, if necessary, assist them to do so. As a matter of fact, I gave personal characters, based on their records up to the time of the strike, to every man who asked for it, and the majority eventually found work, though many had long to wait. It is to be hoped that Hayes, who was the brain behind the movement, realized the misery he had brought upon so many of his dupes and their unfortunate wives and families.

It is interesting to note that several of the strikers were given employment at Soviet House, Moorgate Street, the All-Russian Co-operative Society Limited, a company acting as the trade agents in England of Lenin's Government. Marston held a well-paid position there in 1922, and had secured employment for his son in the same office, while Lakey, the individual who boasted of having stolen papers from my room, was an inquiry agent for the firm, his mother and aunt being employed as charwomen. Other strikers were, and no doubt are still, on the pay list of this company, where each employee is required to belong to a trade union known as "Spolkan," which I understand means "General Staff Organization." These facts are illuminating as indicative of the port towards which the N.U.P.P.O. was steering.

On the very day after the strike collapsed an event took place which contributed in no small measure to the building-up of the force on the foundations already laid by the *esprit de corps* that had carried us successfully through the last few days. The accommodation for police recruits at Peel House was inadequate for the numbers required to bring the force up to its normal strength, nor, as I have before mentioned, was there any place where meetings and social gatherings could be held. This was of vital importance in order to break down the almost water-tight isolation into which each division had drifted. While there was plenty of *esprit de corps* in each separate division there was little for the force as a

whole, a state of affairs which, especially in the realms of sport, prevented the latent possibilities among the men being turned to full account. Mr. Shortt had given me authority to look for a suitable place, and early in August, 1919, hearing that The Eagle Hut, a large range of hutted premises at the Aldwych end of the Strand, was being vacated by the American Red Cross, I went down with Mr. Moylan, the Receiver, and finding the place in every way suitable to our needs the transaction was completed in twenty-four hours. There was need for haste, as several other people, including the Y.M.C.A. and the Board of Education, were after it. This Eagle Hut proved the greatest possible boon to the force. Not only was there accommodation for several hundred recruits, an arrangement which fostered a healthy emulation with the other training centre at Peel House, but in the evenings the large rooms were thrown open for concerts, dances, bridge-drives, and other social gatherings. It also enabled me to see something of the officers and men, as for example when during September I addressed some 800 sergeants on the subject of their duties and the responsibilities of their rank, and in October met the whole of the Federation Boards. During the month of December, 1919, the Prince of Wales honoured the force with his presence at a concert in the Eagle Hut, and spoke a few words to the men afterwards, many of whom had served with him in France. We were deeply indebted also to the theatrical profession, many of whom in their spare time lent a hand at our entertainments. Unfortunately in course of time the place had to be given up for building purposes, but during the two years it belonged to the Metropolitan Police it supplied a badly needed want just at a time when it was most required. The present police sports ground at Imber Court is admirable in the fine weather for outdoor sport and amusements, but the need still exists in the force of some place in a convenient centre where officers and men can meet in social intercourse.

It was during the early part of 1919 that that much-debated

branch of the force, the Women Police, was brought into being. From my experiences with the Military Police in Egypt, where as I have related the Military Police for some years controlled the women of the towns, I had formed the opinion that this work, and other police questions dealing with women and children, could be more satisfactorily carried out by women of the proper type than by men, in whom the sex question can never be completely obliterated. A voluntary organization had been countenanced by my predecessor for work consisting mainly in patrolling the parks and open spaces, but like all amateur expedients it was not satisfactory, being uncontrolled.

Another and more militant organization had also grown up during the war, adopting the title of "Women Police" and dressing in uniform of rather a masculine type. I was told that one of them was seen wearing a sword on one occasion, but to that I cannot vouch. I had several conversations with the lady at the head of this body of women, and was not impressed by her views, which were rather in the direction of converting everything she came across to her own point of view, which was inclined to be extreme.

Eventually I obtained authority to make the experiment, and in February, 1919, the first of the Women Police were selected from several thousand applicants, the number being fixed at 110, and the women put through a course of five weeks' training on the same lines as the male recruits. The work of the Women Police was a good deal retarded by the failure of contractors to provide their uniforms, but by the end of the year I was satisfied that the experiment was on the right lines, and might be extended in the direction of giving the Women Police the power of arrest, and of increasing their numbers.

During the last six months of 1919 the work of this branch of the force showed :—

9,448 Persons cautioned  
147 Police court charges

30,952 Persons assisted  
221 Girls passed to homes,  
infirmaries, etc.



It was found that women who were in trouble, especially those who had yielded to the blandishments of soldiers, Colonial and others, who had returned from the war with plenty of money in their pockets, were more ready to appeal to the Women Police than to other social helpers, even to those of the Salvation Army. I do not know the reason, possibly it was because our women were very carefully chosen, and the need for sympathy in dealing with their own sex impressed on them during their training.

In 1921, under pressure by the Government on the score of economy, my successor at Scotland Yard decided to reduce the Women Police to twenty. No doubt he had good reasons for the reduction, but I feel sure that before long it will be found necessary to resurrect this branch of police work under pressure of public opinion ; and I hope it may be so, as I am convinced that women can be better dealt with by their own sex from a police point of view than by men. Of course, women for police work must be very carefully selected, broad-mindedness and kindly sympathy being essentials.

Another innovation that was started during the year 1919 was the institution of a press room in Scotland Yard, where at certain hours each day pressmen could get reliable information on any subject of public interest connected with police activities in the metropolis. The leakage which occurs in all public offices was very noticeable in police circles when I first went to the Yard, and I found that it was partly due to the temptations offered to the police by people connected with the press, who paid either in cash or in kind for the information, often inaccurate, which they extracted. One well-known man in newspaper circles told me that this source of information cost him £1,000 a year. From the police point of view it was all wrong that officers should take money, or its equivalent, on any pretence whatever, as, while the information given was at times harmless enough, the principle was vicious and might at any moment lead to a public scandal.

After consultation with Sir George Riddell\* the press room opened its doors on 1st October, 1919, and if it did not entirely satisfy the press world as a whole, it helped in some measure to dissipate the clouds of mystery in which Scotland Yard was supposed to be enveloped, and to reduce the temptation to obtain information by bribes. Information was collected at certain hours by an official, originally my private secretary, from all departments in the building, which he then passed on and, if necessary, explained to the press representatives. The press room became a settled institution, and no doubt is now working in a far more efficient and satisfactory manner as a result of four years' experience.

The unrest which had been rampant in different parts of the country throughout the year culminated in the great transport strike towards the end of September. The Metropolitan Police were not called upon for any special activity apart from their ordinary duty, as beyond "alarms and excursions," which generally emanated from railway managers and Cabinet circles, London maintained a stoical calm. I took the precaution, having in mind my previous experience of railway strikes, of sending a selected officer to each of the large railway termini to keep in close touch with the management, in order to check and verify all reports that might come in before they were passed on to the Yard. These officers were also directed to apply to the nearest division for assistance in case of need, instead of applying through the Commissioner's office. It was somewhat of a surprise to me to learn later on that a member of the Government Protection Committee, a distinguished Field-Marshal, had expressed the opinion that the Metropolitan Police were too centralized. Possibly he was ignorant of the policy in force to encourage superintendents and Chief Constables to act on their own initiative, so long as assistance outside their divisions or districts was not required.

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\* Lord Riddell (1st Baron). Vice-chairman, Newspaper Proprietors' Association. Director of various newspaper syndicates.

The Protection Committee struck me as an awe-inspiring assembly, with the solitary exception of our Home Secretary, who was the chairman, and in whose eye, on the two occasions when I was called in, I thought I detected the usual merry twinkle. There were, I think some twenty personages on this Committee, including Cabinet Ministers, a Field-Marshal, an Admiral, a railway manager, and all sorts of lesser fry. I went to the Committee one day towards the end of September to ask for information, as I was entirely in the dark as to what was going on, and thought that perhaps the Committee had overlooked the fact that there was a police force in London. The long faces and general atmosphere of nervous tension made me resolved not to go again if I could help it. The only thing which did make me a little anxious was that many of the London streets being under repair, large quantities of road material were lying about, which always constitute a danger if rioting occurs, to say nothing of the congestion of the traffic, which at this time was particularly heavy owing to the closing down of the railways. I drew attention to the matter, but nothing was done.

On 3rd October I received orders to organize a "Citizen Guard" for London, a most idiotic proposal, seeing that if any increase of civil force was necessary the organization of the Special Constabulary was ready to hand. But no! I suppose some wise-acre on the Committee had had a brain wave. I telegraphed at once for General Sir E. Woodward, the man who had drawn up and carried out the mobilization arrangements for the Army in 1914, and having luckily under my hand at the moment two Staff officers of considerable experience in France who were waiting to go to Poland to reorganize the Gendarmerie—my son, Lieutenant-Colonel G. Macready, R.E., and Major J. S. Mellor—no time was wasted. The following day I addressed a meeting of some eighty mayors of the metropolis, explaining the idea of the Government, and leaving them to discuss details with Sir E.

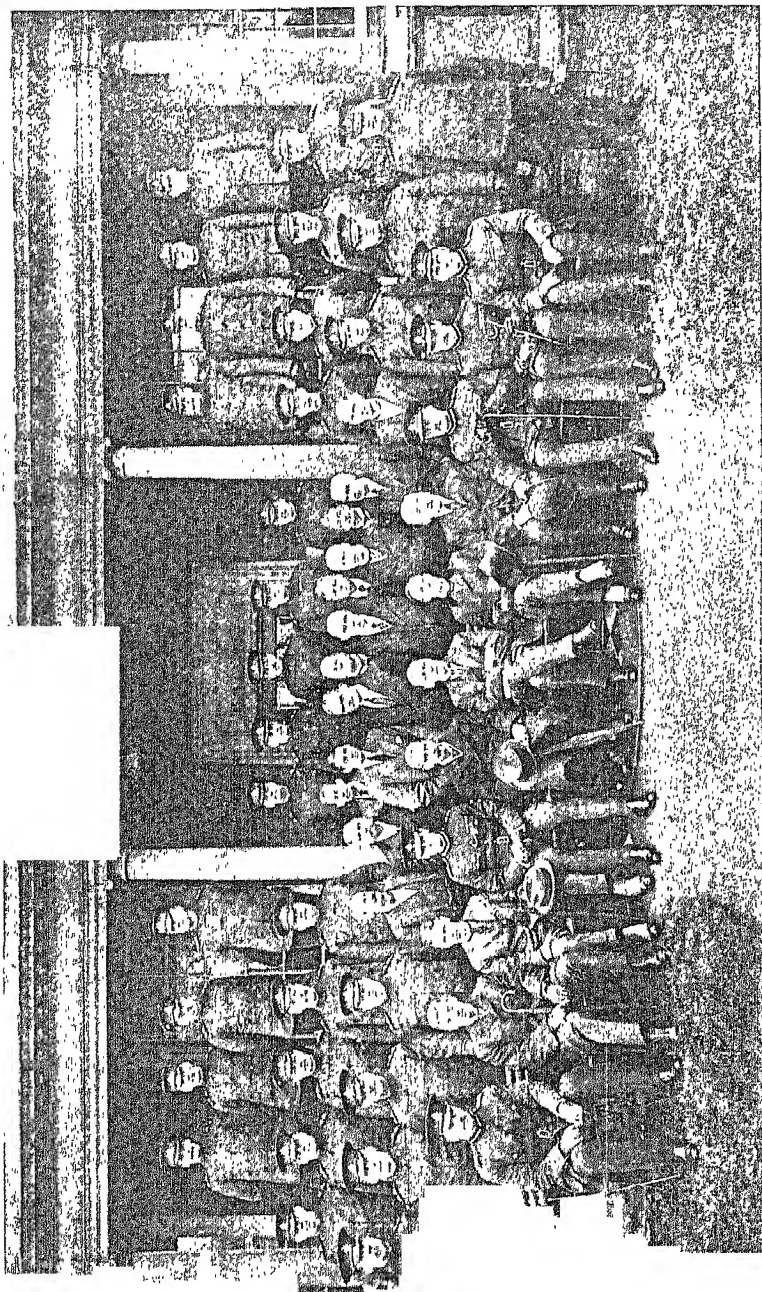
Woodward and his assistants. That night the strike was settled in the usual way by the Government giving in to the demands of the railway and transport workers. During this strike people came forward in the most wonderful manner to offer their services if required, and a most useful division of the Special Constabulary was raised among clubmen in London which contributed to the assistance which the specials were always ready to give on an emergency.

On the occasion of President Poincaré's visit to London, on 10th November, 1919, I was the happy possessor for some days of a double insignia of a Grand Officier de Légion d'Honneur. It happened in this way. On the afternoon of the President's arrival I was rung up by the department at St. James' Palace which is responsible for orders and decorations, and told that they had a French decoration for me and would I send for it. I told the official at the other end of the line that there must be some mistake, as I already had the highest French order I was ever likely to get. However, he was insistent, so I sent my private secretary, and he came back with a red case containing the star, etc., of a Grand Officier. Having locked it up in my safe alongside the one I had been proud to get in 1915, I rang up my friend at St. James's Palace and asked him if I might wear them both. He seemed a serious-minded individual and evidently thought me flippant; also, presumably, the mistake had occurred through his records not being up to date. In the end he asked me to let the matter rest until the President had gone, and then take the matter up with the French Ambassador. Eventually I handed over the duplicate order to the French Military Attaché, my friend Le Vicomte de la Panouse, and in due course received two beautiful Sèvres vases from Monsieur Poincaré.

As the year was closing I was shocked to see on the tape that my old Chief, Lord French, had narrowly escaped assassination in Dublin. The entry in my diary on that day was curiously prophetic: "Will Lloyd George want me to go there?"

From the moment the police strike was over, in the early days of August of this year, the force entered into smooth water, and I found my work not only of great interest but enjoyable, and looked forward to three or four more years as Commissioner, in order to complete and carry out various reforms which were either in progress or in contemplation, before quitting official life, being no believer in clinging to office when the down grade of life begins to steepen.

Before passing on from this eventful year there is one incident reflecting back to the old days in the War Office which it will not be out of place to mention, if only in justice to the many officers and men who were connected with the Adjutant-General's Staff during the war. When the Prime Minister moved the thanks of Parliament to the Army for its services he confined his remarks entirely to the work performed by commanders and by the General Staff. Whatever may have been the cause of this omission it caused much heartburning amongst those who had unremittingly toiled through the weary war years at work often monotonous, requiring close attention and exactitude, and which in many cases might have been thrown aside in order to take up more active and exciting duty at the front, where the limelight was stronger and the chances of reward greater. I was personally cognizant of several cases where officers refused commands, or General Staff work, purely on account of loyalty to the chiefs of their administrative departments who would have found it difficult to replace them, men who had previously had experience in command, and who might have risen to high rank. When I read the Prime Minister's speech, while regretting the omission I attributed it to the usual ignorance that prevails in political circles in regard to all military matters, and to the catch phrase "over the top" with which so many politicians were at that time obsessed. A certain number of letters reached me from former Staff officers of my old department complaining bitterly of this



THE COMMISSIONER, THE STAFF AT SCOTLAND YARD, AND THE SUPERINTENDENTS OF THE  
METROPOLITAN POLICE  
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failure to recognize the work of the department, and finally a letter came from my old friend and former colleague, Jack Cowans, the late Quartermaster-General, who had also been approached on the subject by those who had worked under him, many of whom were men of eminence in business circles. Cowans was thoroughly angry about it, and had written officially to protest, sending a copy of his letter to the King. The following extract from my reply to his letter explains my attitude in the matter :—

As you have got going, I say quite frankly that for the sake of our Staffs and the work they put in, and the fact which you and I know, that while a war can be won by a mediocre General Staff backed up by first-rate administration and organization it certainly cannot be won by a first-rate General Staff backed by mediocrity in the administrative branches, I certainly agree that the omission is one which should be rectified, and I will be prepared to do anything in my power to rectify it, although I should like, as far as possible, to keep the personal element in the background.

After thinking the matter over for a few days I wrote the following letter to the secretary of the War Office, feeling at the same time that the administrative side of the Staff would get little sympathy from the then Secretary of State for War, Mr. Winston Churchill :—

21st August, 1919.

My Dear Brade,

Cowans wrote to me the other day drawing my attention to the fact that when the Prime Minister, on the 6th of August, moved the thanks of Parliament to the Army, no reference, either direct or indirect, was made to any of the administrative departments, with the exception of the R.A.M.C., who are a department of the A.G.'s branch of the Staff.

The omission struck me when I read the Prime Minister's speech, and since then I have been spoken to on several occasions by officers who had been associated with the A.G.'s branch during the war, but I refrained from making any move for the reason that it is difficult to say anything without introducing personalities, and that is the very last thing that I should wish.



I am entirely in agreement with Cowans's letter, but he writes mainly from the point of view of administration on this side of the Channel, whereas I am able to speak from experience of the administrative work that was carried out both in France and in the United Kingdom. The mention of the R.A.M.C., magnificent as its work was, brings into strong relief the omission of the other great administrative departments, some of which were created during the war, and others inflated from small nuclei to an extent which had never been imagined in pre-war days.

I am not going to enumerate the details of the organization and administration of the branch of the Staff for which I was responsible, but will just mention that from 21st March, 1918, up to the Armistice, no less than 740,624 men were despatched from the United Kingdom overseas by the joint efforts of the A.G. and Q.M.G. Staff. Further, the work on the Lines of Communication, so vital to successful operations, is purely that of the two great administrative Staffs. As one who has put soldiering aside for ever, I can speak quite plainly, and would say that the danger of the omission lies in the fact that ambitious officers in the future will be inclined to look upon the General Staff as the only channel to promotion and distinction, because representatives of that branch of the Staff, apart from Army Commanders, have alone been picked out for special praise.

I am aware that the Prime Minister spoke on advice which was tendered to him, and also that there is a school of thought in the Army which would convert the *General Staff Officer*, whether at the War Office or elsewhere, into a *senior Staff officer*. This, from my experience, would be fatal, and in years to come might, owing to mediocre personnel, result in the failure of the administrative Staffs, in which case I venture to think that no war could be carried through, however brilliantly its strategy may be conceived. Although I had no intention, until Cowans took the matter up, of moving in the matter, I am glad to place my opinion on record for what it may be worth, for during my time as Adjutant-General, both in France and "to the Forces," signs were not wanting of an inclination in certain quarters to minimize the importance of the administrative Staffs, which I hope I combated not unsuccessfully. Since then, on more than one occasion I have noticed, when reading despatches, evidence of the same spirit, due possibly to ignorance of the work and of facts; but there is no question that a policy of

minimizing the importance of the administrative Staffs, instead of placing them on an equality with the General Staff, will eventually lead to a state of affairs which, I fear, may affect the Army in any operations on which it may in the future be engaged.

Yours sincerely,

C. F. N. M.

A copy of this letter and of Cowans's were sent to the Prime Minister, so that he might see that we at all events had the courage of our opinions. Of course nothing resulted, but shortly afterwards Lord Haldane, who can justly claim to be the greatest War Minister of modern times, and whose knowledge of Army organization is unrivalled, told me that he entirely sympathized with the attitude which Cowans and I had taken up, although it was too late for the omission to be remedied. Lord Haldane, it will be remembered, was the creator of the General Staff, but left the War Office before his conception had become fully developed. Under his successors in office the original idea became distorted, and has drifted somewhat out of its proper channel.



## CHAPTER XV.

ON 23rd March, 1920, while lunching at the Garrick, a telephone message was brought in from the Prime Minister asking me to go round to 10, Downing Street at once. I had an uneasy foreboding that it had something to do with the island I hoped never to set foot in again. I found the Prime Minister, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Walter Long, and Lord French sitting round a table at which they had been lunching, and Mr Lloyd George wasted no time in asking me if I would go to Ireland in command of the forces, his main argument being that having had experience of police work I should be able to help in co-ordinating the activities of the military and the police. A suggestion was made that I should take over the administration of the police, but I pointed out that such a position would, under the existing conditions, be impossible, the two services being under two separate departments of the State, also from what I had seen of the Irish police forces on a previous occasion I knew that to put them on a proper footing would require the undivided attention of one man. The deciding factor, indeed the only one that weighed with me, was the evident desire of my old Chief, Lord French, that I should take the appointment. But for that nothing would have induced me to return to a country to which I was never attracted, or to take up a task which I instinctively felt would be affected by every variation of the political weathercock, and in which it was doubtful if any satisfactory result could be attained.

However, I left the room having accepted the post, and went across to the War Office to inform Mr. Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State, who did not strike me as particularly

enthusiastic over the matter. At the time I thought that this was because he had not been called in to Downing Street when it was discussed, but I afterwards gathered that he had an idea of offering the appointment to Sir William Robertson. Had I known this before I should certainly have further discussed the matter with Lord French before accepting, though as events turned out I feel that I saved my friend Robertson, as well as any other soldier to whom the appointment might have been offered, from several years of uneasy and thankless endeavour, in which the only bright spot was the extraordinary forbearance and discipline of the troops in the face of provocation and danger at the hands of the rebels in Ireland, coupled with abuse and misrepresentation on the part of a section of their own countrymen in Great Britain.

On the 30th April, the Prime Minister told me that Sir Hamar Greenwood was to replace Mr. Ian Macpherson as Chief Secretary, and outlined the policy he wished carried out in the direction of endeavouring to bring about a better feeling between the authorities at the Castle and de Valera's followers, at the same time making it plain that a continuance of the campaign of assassination would necessitate measures more drastic than any which had been hitherto enforced.

All this, as events proved, was merely the view of the moment, for never up to the time the troops finally left Ireland did the Government take the one step by which alone order could have been restored, that is to say, the declaration of martial law throughout the land. No doubt there were political objections to such a course, nor would it in any way have solved the Irish question. The political aspect, however, was no business of mine, my particular task being to be ready to support the civil power with all the means at my disposal, to advise, if asked, upon the best methods for building up the police forces, and to be at the Viceroy's disposal for any assistance he

might require in regard to the administration of the country so far as it affected the military and police.

I took the opportunity at this interview with Mr. Lloyd George to impress upon him the necessity of appointing General Horwood to succeed me as Commissioner at Scotland Yard. It was not a year since the force had emerged from the strike of 1919, and though the spirit among all ranks was of the best, it was necessary that the Commissioner, at all events for some time to come, should be a man accustomed to handle a large body of men, as well as to identify himself with their interests, and I was afraid that when my back was turned the work of the last twenty months might be thrown away by the appointment, through interest or jobbery, of some man with no aptitude for, or experience of, that side of the work. The knowledge that my nominee would be accepted enabled me to bid farewell to my many friends at the Yard, and in the force, with a lighter heart than would otherwise have been the case, and many were the expressions of regret that poured in upon me when my departure became known. My regret at leaving Scotland Yard was to some extent tempered by the proud memory of having been associated with a force that may justly claim to be the finest police organization in the world. To the regrets of my comrades in the Metropolitan Police were added shoals of letters from friends far and near, mostly couched in terms of commiseration rather than of congratulation. A typical one from my old friend Jack Cowans, who had then completed his time as Quartermaster-General, is worth quoting :—

Dear Old A.G.,

29/3/20.

What is this I see? Going to Ireland? Now *do* take care. The devils don't play cricket just now, and it's worse than strikes. I have been meaning to catch you, but, alas! got laid low, but am just out of hospital and ordered off to Biarritz for a fortnight. I shall often think of you and wish you every success, and return full of honours. Take great care of your dear old self, *please*.

Yours, J. J. C.

It was cheering to know that so many wished me well, although they found no grounds for the congratulations generally associated with a new appointment, and were evidently imbued with much the same misgivings that actuated my friends at the Garrick Club when they used to greet me on my periodical appearances during the following two years with : " Hullo ! so glad to see you're still alive."

During the time that remained to me in London I was fully occupied in looking into matters about which the Lord-Lieutenant had spoken, such as a recruiting organization in England for the Royal Irish Constabulary, whose sources of Irish recruits were practically dried up, and the state of the military forces in Ireland, which at the time only numbered some 20,000 men and were 5,000 below establishment, owing to the zeal of the Government to reduce the Army.

Arrangements were made for an R.I.C. recruiting centre to be established at Scotland Yard under an Irish Constabulary officer who was sent over from Dublin. From Henry Wilson at the War Office I received an assurance that everything possible should be done, within the limits allowed by the policy of the Government, to keep troops in Ireland up to a requisite strength.

Let me here say one word in regard to Henry Wilson's attitude towards affairs in Ireland at this time and up to the day he laid down the office of Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1922. I have already said that we had agreed to differ in regard to his attitude towards Ulster in 1914, a difference that affected in no way our friendship or the harmony of our professional intercourse. Before I crossed to Dublin we had several long talks on the general situation, from which it was clear that he firmly held to a policy of stamping out rebellion with a strong hand, a policy with which I was in absolute agreement on the understanding that the Government would provide the necessary means, a vital condition of which I was by no means sanguine even then.

From the time of which I write, Henry Wilson gave me unflinching and vigorous support, even at the expense of other calls upon the Army which from a professional standpoint he considered were of even greater urgency, and when affairs became troublesome in Ulster he maintained a judgment as clear and unbiased as if he had no connection with the "Black North," as he used to call it, in any shape or form. Being in almost daily correspondence with Henry Wilson, seeing him also at frequent intervals whenever I came to London, there was never an occasion when he did not use every means at his disposal, first to strengthen and assist the troops in Ireland in their difficult task up to the time of the truce in July, 1921, and afterwards to alleviate the invidious and impossible position in which they found themselves. To me personally his support and his cheery optimism in everything, except the political future of his native land, was one of the few bright spots in a trying and anxious experience.

In order to obtain as many points of view as possible on the state of affairs in Ireland I got into touch with several natives of the country of every shade of opinion, and thought I would try my luck with two of the few Irish members of Parliament left at Westminster—Captain W. Redmond (the son of John Redmond) and Mr. J. Devlin—asking them both for a short interview at any place they might name. I received no reply, but a few days later Sir W. Sutherland\* came round and told me that while the two gentlemen wished me well they dared neither meet me nor write a reply to my note. Never before had I realized what a dangerous person I must be, nor how little some politicians care for the well-being of their country apart from their personal interests. It was easy enough to ascertain the opinions of the advocates of coercion, whose policy consisted in shooting or locking up everybody in Ireland who differed from them, but I was anxious if

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\* The Rt. Hon. Sir William Sutherland, P.C., K.C.B. M.P. for Argyllshire. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, 1918-1920.



possible to hear something of what the other side thought, as it might give an indication of more effective methods than those which, with variations, had been in force off and on for centuries without any ostensible result, judging by the state of the country.

On the Saturday before my departure I had the honour of lunching at Windsor with Their Majesties the King and Queen, both of whom evinced deep interest in the Irish problem, expressing a fervent hope that better days might be in store for the country.

Before describing my own experiences in Ireland it may be well to recapitulate shortly the principal events that had taken place since May, 1918, when Lord French succeeded Lord Wimborne as Lord-Lieutenant and Mr. Shortt became Chief Secretary, events which, following each other as the steps on a ladder, led up eventually to the Treaty of 6th December, 1921, and the accomplishment of almost all for which Arthur Griffith had unceasingly worked through the greater part of his life.

When I was searching for information about Sinn Fein, somebody, I forget who, told me to be sure to read Arthur Griffith's book, "The Resurrection of Hungary." In this book, written in 1904, Griffith unfolds the whole plan of campaign of Sinn Fein, so much so that in the copy which lay on the desk in my study at the Royal Hospital, Dublin, I was able to mark up as the months rolled on the dates on which the various measures laid down by him in 1904 were brought more or less successfully into force during the years 1919-21. In this book Griffith describes the steps by which Hungary wrung her independence from Austria in February, 1867, and draws a parallel showing how the same result could be reached by his own countrymen. The whole programme was unfolded by Griffith at the first annual convention of the Irish National Council held at Dublin in November, 1903, and to it he adhered, except in one particular, until December, 1921, when he put his signature to the Treaty

with the British Government. That one particular was the employment of active opposition. The policy of Deak, the man who compassed Hungarian independence, was based on passive resistance alone, assassination and forceful methods finding no place in his programme. I have always believed that Arthur Griffith's intention lay in a similar direction, and that he would gladly have dispensed with the campaign of assassination which de Valera and Michael Collins superimposed on his original policy of passive resistance. The "Resurrection of Hungary" may be said to be the Bible of Sinn Fein, and it was curious how few people, especially those who were concerned with the Government of Ireland, had ever heard of the book. The principle underlying the inception of Sinn Fein policy was that Parliamentary representation in the House of Commons had from the Irish point of view been a failure. In Griffith's words : "It (the Irish Parliamentary Party in Westminster) has been there for thirty-three years—a generation. To keep it there Ireland has expended over £600,000, and during the period of its existence the population of Ireland has decreased by 20 per cent., and the taxation of Ireland for British purposes has increased by 70 per cent."

Such was the beginning of the organization which through succeeding years, working quietly underground or unheeded by the Castle authorities responsible for the government of the country whenever it showed itself above the surface, brought about the rising of 1916, after which, thanks to the weakness displayed by the Government of the day, it came boldly before the country to claim that it was the one party through which the Irish could secure their rightful place among the nations of the world.

The decision in January, 1918, that the Military Service Acts would not be extended to Ireland, was claimed as another victory over the Government and a proof of Ireland's strength, and when during the following spring the man-power Bill was made applicable to that country the whole of the South rose

against it. The despatch of Lord French as Lord-Lieutenant was part of the programme for conscription in Ireland, but after a time he realized that the forces against it had become too strong, and that the time for such a step had been allowed to pass. Quite apart from political opposition and the stand for their so-called rights of self-determination, it is hardly to be wondered that the Irish were averse from being thrown into the European cauldron at the time. The glamour of the war had long passed into a grim determination on the part of those who were ready to die rather than submit to German domination, a factor which did not appeal in any way to the bulk of the Southern Irish. In Ulster recruiting was practically at a standstill, and in Great Britain every artifice was being used by individuals to escape service, and by certain sections of the people and the press to hamper the flow of men. No more unfortunate moment could have been chosen to endeavour to enforce conscription upon a population influenced by hatred and fear.

At the General Election of December, 1918, Sinn Fein practically swept the political board in Southern Ireland, Dail Eireann, as their Parliament is called, assembling for the first time during the following month, when a Declaration of Independence was voted, Eamon de Valera elected President of the Irish Republic, and Michael Collins, who had crossed from London to escape conscription, becoming one of the Ministers and the mainspring of the party of physical force.

Discovery of a supposed German plot, which was not substantiated by very convincing evidence, had led in May, 1918, to the arrest and deportation to England of de Valera and Arthur Griffith, a step which helped to enhance their claims to popular sympathy. De Valera, who shortly afterwards effected his escape from Lincoln Gaol with the assistance of Collins and the connivance or laxity of certain of the prison staff, remained in hiding for some time, proceeding later to America to collect funds

and to enlist the sympathy of the Americans for the claim of Ireland to partake in President Wilson's broadcast doctrine of self-determination. The opening of the year 1919, which marked the first Session of the Republican Dail, saw also the inauguration of that systematic campaign of assassination which for long years held the country in its grip, and which down the ages to come will be associated with the name of Sinn Fein. The original policy of Sinn Fein did not, as I have already pointed out, contemplate resort to force, much less to the adoption of a policy of cold-blooded murder. That the hotheads of the movement should have chafed at the slow methodical pressure of passive resistance, so foreign to the Irish temperament, was to be expected, more especially when under their very eyes they had seen their fellow-countrymen of the North arming and drilling with the avowed intention of resisting the King's Government by force. The feebleness displayed by the Government towards their own gun-running exploit at Howth, towards their armed demonstrations under the very walls of the Castle, and lastly towards the rebels who in 1916 endeavoured to strike a mortal blow at the Empire in its hour of stress, encouraged Michael Collins and his followers in the belief that the time had come when they too might terrify the Government into submission. That the Southern Irish would in the course of time have armed themselves and applied the murder methods indigenous to the soil I have no doubt, but the impulse to do so at that particular moment was due mainly, if not entirely, to the example set by Carson in the North, at whose door must lie a large measure of responsibility for the blood spilt throughout the length and breadth of the island, a responsibility shared with a Government who were afraid or unable to govern.

Ireland for many centuries has been rarely free from sporadic murders even in times of its greatest tranquillity, murders consequent on private quarrels or antagonism to the landed class based

on real or supposed grievances. These crimes were, however, altogether different from the studied ruthless campaign which opened in January, 1919, with the murder of two R.I.C. constables on escort duty near Tipperary, followed soon afterwards by the assassination of a magistrate in County Mayo, the first fruits of a policy of which Michael Collins was the prime mover, if not the originator.

As at this time, when de Valera was about to proceed to America to enlist the sympathies of that country, it was inadvisable that the methods employed by his followers should go out to the world under a label of murder or assassination, they were dignified with the title of guerilla warfare. The British Government never recognized the term "guerilla warfare"; had they done so the task of the soldier would have been infinitely easier, because every man found armed and not wearing a distinctive badge or uniform would have been shot out of hand, and civil rule would for the time have been in abeyance. Collins and those who directed the activities of the Irish Republican Army, a name assumed by the organization of gunmen, were undoubtedly gambling, and gambling successfully, on the chance that the British Government would hesitate to pick up the gage which had been thrown down to treat them as guerillas under the rules and conditions of war.

The whole success of the I.R.A. campaign of murder rested upon the disguise of the gunmen as ordinary civilians, often accompanied by women, first to lure a victim, and then to take over and conceal about their persons the weapons with which murder had been committed. Nor did these deeds require any great display of pluck, because they were invariably committed when the victim was out of reach of help and no civilian would ever attempt to interfere or to give evidence. In one solitary instance during the time I was in Ireland did a gallant civilian endeavour

to stop a murderer, only to lose his life in the attempt, while scores of passers-by ran away or looked the other way.

From the point of view of Michael Collins and his associates nothing could have been more effective or safer for themselves than this campaign of assassination to paralyse British rule in Ireland, providing that the Government did not treat the outbreak as an act of war. It was common knowledge that the Army was being rapidly demobilized, its attenuated ranks being filled with young untrained soldiers, and that Great Britain was tired to death of war. Equally well known to Collins was it that such Secret Service as had been left by Mr. Birrell was entirely in the hands of police agents whose identity was well known, and that he could count on many sympathetic friends in every Government department in Dublin. With a large proportion of the population passively in his favour from the first, but more actively as time went on, and a large proportion cowed into acquiescence of his methods, the risks taken by the I.R.A. leaders in organizing their campaign were in reality not great, so long as the Government adhered to civil government tempered with the Defence of the Realm and the Criminal Law and Procedure Acts, the former applicable to the whole of Great Britain during the war, and both far too cumbersome for effective action against a nation of which ninety per cent. of the population were either supine or hostile to the Government.

Obviously the first step to be taken by the I.R.A. executive was the destruction of the remnant of the Police Secret Service, which was accomplished by the systematic murder of nearly every officer of the "G" division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. This was followed by the disintegration of the R.I.C. For some years prior to 1919 an insidious campaign of boycott had rendered the life of the R.I.C. constables more and more unpleasant, especially in outlying districts. Many of the officers and men with long service had little desire beyond completing their time

for a well-earned pension and to be left in peace till then. Recruiting became difficult owing to open or veiled threats to parents whose sons had thought of joining up, and the very organization of the force scattered over the country in small groups, often housed under conditions that admitted of no defence in case of attack, was altogether unsuitable to meet a state of affairs unprecedented since its creation. It was wonderful to me how many of these devoted men put up the fights they did, when it is remembered that not only were their own lives at risk, but, what was infinitely worse, the lives of their wives or aged parents living perhaps in some far-away part of the country, who would be tracked down by the human sleuths of the I.R.A. It was hardly surprising if under such conditions the R.I.C. fell off in numbers, or that Irishmen hesitated to join.

All through 1919 the gunmen plied their trade, which at one time was a lucrative calling as they were well paid for each murder successfully carried through, and the I.R.A. built up its organization, receiving encouragement and hard cash from America, together with the scarcely disguised blessing of the Irish Roman Catholic Church on their enterprise. A section of the women of Ireland, in order not to be behind their brothers in crime, formed themselves into an organization under the name of the *Cuman na m'Ban*, ostensibly for the purpose of doing voluntary aid work for the wounded, but developing, under the direction of the notorious Countess Markievicz, into active assistants and decoys to gunmen. The development of rebel activities among children was catered for by a system of Boy and Girl Scouts, under the name of the *Fianna*, who carried messages and in many other ways assisted their elders in their campaign of crime. Drilling took place in various localities which led to occasional encounters with the R.I.C., against whom the boycott was more rigidly enforced, and the tale of murders mounted up month by month.

On the part of the Government, Sinn Fein and other rebel organizations were proclaimed, as were localities where outrage and murder had been prevalent. The proclaiming of Sinn Fein was not tactically a sound move, because the membership of what was originally a political sect was by no means confined to those who advocated assassination and murder. As a result many moderate men were arrested merely because they were known to be in sympathy with the political views of the party, and consequently under a sense of injustice these men threw in their lot with the extremists. The organizations that should have been proclaimed were the Volunteers, the Irish Republican Army and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, of whom every member was an actual or potential murderer.

In September, 1919, one of the few outbreaks on the part of British soldiers took place in consequence of an attack on a party of soldiers marching to church. In the affray which, being the first attempt on the Army by the rebels, was wholly unexpected, one soldier was killed and the local jury, encouraged by the coroner, who described the affair as "an act of warfare," refused to bring in a verdict of murder. The dead man's comrades, infuriated by this miscarriage of justice, broke out of barracks and wrecked the houses of certain of the jurymen, inflicting, however, no bodily harm. Of course the opportunity was not lost by the Irish, and those who sympathized with their methods, to blacken the soldiers, who, carried away by the impulse of the moment, gave vent to feelings roused by an unprovoked and cowardly attack.

The tale of outrage for the year 1919, which had reached a total of one hundred and twenty murders and attempted murders, was crowned on the 19th December, by an attempt to assassinate the Lord-Lieutenant, Lord French, as he was returning to the Viceregal Lodge from Ashtown Station. The prime mover in this affair was a notorious rebel, Dan Breen.



Early in 1920 Sir J. Byrne, who had been Inspector-General of the Constabulary since 1916, vacated his post. The affair was shrouded in a good deal of mystery, but I have little doubt that the origin of the trouble was due to Byrne being a Roman Catholic and therefore regarded with suspicion by the Chief Secretary, Ian Macpherson, and certain other Castle officials tinged with that religious intolerance which has for so long been the curse of Ireland.

Byrne was succeeded by Mr. Smith, who had been the Commissioner of Police in Belfast during my stay there in 1914. The appointment was not a happy one, a man being required for the post, especially at that time, free from the prejudices inherent to long service in Ireland, and with organizing ability of a high standard.

Early in March, 1920, at the request of the Lord-Lieutenant, an experienced officer from Scotland Yard, Mr. Olive, went to Dublin as one of a committee to inquire into the conditions of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and to suggest measures necessary to place that force on an efficient footing. Mr. Olive's time in Dublin was far from pleasant, and he was obliged to leave his apartments in the city and take up his residence in the Castle, having on several occasions been followed by suspicious-looking men.

On his return to London he told me about his experiences and the information he had acquired during the inquiry, from which it was evident that the Dublin Police had become a mere cypher, so far as the preservation of law and order was concerned. Nor can this state of affairs be wondered at, as apart from the fact that for a long time recruits for the force had been selected with an eye to their physical stature rather than to their intelligence, the men were not accommodated in police barracks, but found their own lodgings in the town, an arrangement which made it a simple

matter for the gunmen to waylay and murder them in their own homes if opportunity was wanting when they were on duty. As time went on and after their revolvers had been withdrawn, they were left in peace by the gunmen, and became mere ornaments standing about at street corners watching the traffic and passing the time of day with casual acquaintances.

As early as 1919 the question of the proclamation of martial law had been discussed, but the Government could not bring themselves to face it. In this attitude they were encouraged by the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown that the powers given to a competent military authority under the Defence of the Realm Act were as effective and powerful as those which could be enforced under martial law, a pronouncement no doubt theoretically sound, but which in practice proved to be erroneous, as will be shown later on.

It was therefore determined in January, 1920, to strengthen the control of the competent military authorities by transferring to them the powers hitherto vested in the magistrates and police authorities, and at the same time to arrest and deport large numbers of the Irish Volunteers, who were responsible for the unrest then prevailing. All arrangements were made by the military for the arrests to be made throughout the country on the night of 23rd January, 1920. On 21st January the Government went back on their two-weeks-old policy and stopped all action. A few days later, however, the arrest of persons suspected of complicity in outrages was authorized, those against whom evidence might later be forthcoming to be handed over to the civil power for trial, and those against whom no evidence could be produced to be deported and interned. Over sixty persons were thus arrested and deported to England as a result of the first sweep up on the last day of January 1920, and by the end of April 241 known or suspected officers of the Irish Republican Army, as the Irish Volunteers were

now called, had been dealt with, a third of whom came from County Cork.

That this policy was effective was evidenced by the clamour in the pro-Irish press on both sides of the Irish Channel, which reflected the anxiety felt by the organizers of the campaign against the Government. At the same time considerable quantities of arms had been seized by military patrols accompanied by police, but after the first raids persons in possession of arms took steps to hide them with considerable success until the formation of a Military Intelligence Service enabled the troops and police to work on more systematic and therefore more successful lines. The capture of a considerable number of men of more or less importance in the I.R.A. organization, while it undoubtedly for the moment disturbed the plans of the rebels, gave them and their friends a great opportunity for airing a new grievance.

The names of the men selected for arrest by the military had been taken from lists of the I.R.A. which from time to time had fallen into the hands of the police or soldiers, and which, as after events proved, were reasonably correct. The legal advisers to the Chief Secretary, however, based their decisions in regard to the arrested men rather on the past history of the men as known to the police, whose records were incomplete and out of date, than on the fact that they were members of a treasonable organization. Men were thus kept for long periods in confinement while inquiries were in progress, and in the end many, who undoubtedly were active participants in the rebel campaign, were released. These delays in the release of men who, as a consequence of release, claimed to be innocent, and the internment of others without trial, were worked up by Sinn Fein and their sympathizers as another example of the brutal methods of their hereditary oppressors. Nor did the Irish lose the chance of putting forward preposterous claims for imaginary damage to their houses and belongings during the searches for arms, claims supported by faked evidence both

documentary and oral, a ready supply of which is always forthcoming in Irish disputes.

For a short time, and until the I.R.A., so to speak, recovered their breath, outrages decreased, but not for long. By the middle of February, 1920, the campaign of individual murder was in full swing again, accompanied by the burning of vacated police barracks, a safe and easy pastime, and by a shower of anonymous threatening letters, ornamented with skulls, crossbones, and coffins to officials and persons suspected of being out of sympathy with the gunmen. In nearly every case in which time and opportunity was afforded to the police to resist attacks, even to the extent of firing a few rounds, the rebels fled for their lives. It was about this time that the first cases of cutting off girls' hair as a punishment for talking to police or soldiers occurred, an addition to the I.R.A. code of warfare which, if not chivalrous, had the advantage of being attended with little risk, a dominating factor in all operations of the gunmen. Some time afterwards, when the police were reinforced from England, this particular form of outrage was checked by shaving the heads of prominent male rebel sympathizers in localities where women had been victimized in this way.

Among the murders which signalized the gunmen's reply to the wholesale arrests of their leaders, none was more brutal than that of Mr. Alan Bell, a resident magistrate, over seventy years of age, who was employed at Dublin Castle on certain investigations for the Government. On 26th March, 1920, the old gentleman was dragged from a tramcar full of people and shot on the pavement alongside the car, the murderers walking quietly away. At the inquest the coroner's jury returned an open verdict, no one coming forward to identify the assassins, who were described as "respectable young men." The Dublin Metropolitan Police, on whom the responsibility for tracing the crime lay, had by this time become paralysed by the action of the

gunmen, many of the best detectives, including the Assistant Commissioner for detective work, Mr. Redmond, having been killed off, while those who were left realized that activity on their part would be their death-warrant.

A few days previous to the murder of Mr. Bell a crime had been committed in Cork which is still shrouded in mystery. Among those who had been selected for internment by the military as officers of the I.R.A. was Thomas MacCurtain, the Lord Mayor of Cork, who was also the Commander of the Mid-Cork Brigade of the I.R.A. It was known that MacCurtain was by no means an extremist, having denounced the campaign of assassination, and having refused to use the Corporation funds for purposes of the I.R.A. Arrangements had been made to arrest him on the night of 20th March, but before the party arrived word came that he had been murdered in his house. The coroner, with a jury of men who were either members of the I.R.A. or persons who were fully alive to the penalty of differing from the I.R.A. point of view, brought in an absurd verdict of wilful murder against the Prime Minister, the Lord-Lieutenant, the Chief Secretary and the Inspector-General R.I.C.

There was not a shadow of reliable evidence connecting the Royal Irish Constabulary with the crime, and after making every allowance for a loosening of the discipline of that force consequent on the failure of the Government to bring to justice a single one of the many men who had murdered members of the force, there was no reason or incentive why the Lord Mayor should have been picked out as an object of revenge. Among the extremists in that hotbed of rebellion, the city of Cork, there were many others whose death would have removed at least one active gunman, while it was common knowledge that MacCurtain had used his influence on the side of moderation.

Looking back, after some knowledge and experience of the men who directed the energies of the I.R.A. in Cork, I have little



C.-IN-C., WITH "TIN ANNIE"  
Dublin, 1921



doubt that the Lord Mayor was murdered by extremists of the I.R.A. without instructions from headquarters, as an example of the fate that awaited those who were not whole-hearted towards a policy of indiscriminate murder. Whoever committed the deed, and whatever the motive for it may have been, the rebels lost no time in turning it to the best advantage by means of their excellently organized propaganda department, thus stimulating the hatred of their followers against the Irish Constabulary.

On the 30th March, 1920, Mr. William Cosgrave, the man on whose shoulders the mantle of Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins was destined to fall, was deported to England, having been arrested under the D.O.R.A. a short time previously, and on the same day the following proclamation was posted throughout the South of Ireland by his brother conspirators :—

PROCLAMATION.

1. Whereas the spies and traitors known as the Royal Irish Constabulary are holding this country for the enemy, and whereas said spies and bloodhounds are conspiring with the enemy to bomb and bayonet and otherwise outrage a peaceful, law-abiding, and liberty-loving people;
2. Wherefore we do hereby proclaim and suppress said spies and traitors, and do hereby solemnly warn prospective recruits that they join the R.I.C. at their own peril. All nations are agreed as to the fate of traitors. It has the sanction of God and man.

By order of the G.O.C.

Irish Republican Army.

If any doubt had existed during the past fifteen months of the existence of a definite intention to overthrow British rule by force of arms it should have been set at rest by this proclamation, which placed the issue squarely before the world.

At the moment when the Sinn Feiners issued their defiance to British rule the Government were engaged in passing their Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons, a Bill that apparently pleased nobody, and was looked upon by the dominant party in



Southern Ireland as yet another example of weakness and inability to face facts on the part of the governing body at Westminster. From different sides of the House came two proposals to the Government, either of which would have been a definite and intelligible course to pursue—one, that a real and genuine measure of self-government should be offered to Ireland, the very step adopted by the Cabinet some eighteen months later ; the other that order should be restored in the South before any further move towards self-government was entered upon.

There was only one possible way by which order could be restored, although I did not realize it myself until I had been in Ireland for some months, and that was to declare martial law throughout the whole country, North and South, to be applied as might be deemed necessary, and to treat the restoration of order as a purely military operation without interference by civil elements on either side of the Irish Channel. To do this effectively at that time would have required an increase to the Army in Ireland, but not in excess of the number of soldiers and police who were actually employed during the summer of 1921. While I have never had any doubt that order could have been effectively restored by this means, the time necessary to do so depending on the number of soldiers available, I have, looking back, equally no doubt that the solution of the Irish question would have been as far off as ever.

Time may show that the solution hit upon by Mr. Lloyd George in December, 1921, is the correct one, and that the Irish Free State will prove a strength and support to the Empire. On the other hand it may be discovered, as years roll by, that a people characterized through past centuries by lack of discipline, intolerance of restraint, and with no common standard of public morality, can only be governed and held in check under the protection of a strong military garrison.

Having wound up my affairs at Scotland Yard and scraped together as much information as possible in London bearing on the

state of affairs in Ireland, and the means which would be at my disposal to cope with them, I crossed over with my senior A.D.C. on the night of 13th/14th April, 1920. Arriving at North Wall, Dublin, at 5 a.m., we went straight to the Viceregal Lodge, where we remained for a week before moving into the Commander-in-Chief's official residence at the Royal Hospital.

Dublin on the day I arrived was in the throes of a general strike as a protest against the retention of the men who had been arrested under circumstances to which allusion has already been made, and who had been on hunger strike for nine days. Excitement was worked up to fever pitch, not only by Sinn Fein sympathizers, but by many whose overwrought sentimentality was fired by the exaggerated rumours spread broadcast throughout the city. Business was at a standstill, the streets being crowded with men and women all engaged in discussing the fate of the prisoners in Mountjoy Prison.

The Lord Mayor (Larry O'Neill) despatched an excitedly worded telegram to the Chief Secretary in London, to the effect that Dublin was in a fever of excitement owing to the dangerous condition of the political prisoners on hunger strike and that a dreadful tragedy was feared, following it up by a similar appeal to the American Ambassador. The Standing Committee of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, in order not to be behindhand in their efforts to stand well with Sinn Fein, passed a strong resolution laying the responsibility for any catastrophe that might occur on "the Government that substitutes cruelty, vengeance, and gross injustice for the equity, moderation, and fair play which should ever accompany the exercise of repressive law." No such appeal for equity, moderation, and fair play was ever made by the Hierarchy to those under whose orders red murder stalked through the length and breadth of the land. The centre of attraction was Mountjoy Prison itself, which, heavily guarded by troops, was surrounded by dense crowds of onlookers, some drawn there out

of sympathy with the prisoners, others to gratify their curiosity and gossiping proclivities.

At 11 o'clock on the morning of my arrival I attended a conference of officials, presided over by the Lord-Lieutenant, to discuss the burning question at the moment—that of the hunger strikers. These men were untried, having been arrested as officers, or suspected officers, of the I.R.A., and the fact that they had been detained for some considerable period without being brought to trial had been taken up strongly in England. Another point was that experience of hunger strikers was at that time very limited. In the past suffragettes had resorted to that form of protest, and had been released under the "Cat and Mouse" Act, while more recently in Ireland the death of a man, Thomas Ashe, from the same cause had resulted in much outcry at his so-called martyrdom. Lord French was aware that in order to give every chance to the policy of the new Home Rule Bill, and to ease the way for the new Chief Secretary, Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Government were desirous of conciliatory rather than of coercive measures, in the hope that such a course would be accepted by Sinn Féin as evidence of a desire to find a way satisfactory to all parties out of the existing situation.

In the course of the conversation that morning it came out that the untried prisoners had gone on hunger strike as a protest against their not having received the modified form of prison treatment to which they were entitled under the printed rules of the prison. Sir J. Taylor, the Assistant Under-Secretary, endeavoured to throw the blame on the Governor of the prison, but there was little doubt that the fault lay in Sir J. Taylor's office, where work was centralized to a degree almost unbelievable. To my mind this fact outweighed all other considerations, because if one of the strikers died and it afterwards became known that the original cause of the strike was a protest against the withholding of certain

established privileges, the position of the Castle authorities and of the Government would have been difficult.

During the afternoon the Lord Mayor of Dublin came to see the Lord-Lieutenant. It was the first time I had seen the gentleman with whom afterwards I had occasional official relations. At the interview with Lord French he was full of protestations that peace would result from the liberation of the hunger strikers, painting their condition with that wealth of colour that only a master of Irish blarney can achieve, accompanied by the trickle of an occasional tear down his cheeks. He promised Lord French that if the prisoners were released he would obtain their parole to return to prison when called upon, and, indeed, there was very little he would not have promised at that moment. Several telephonic conversations took place with Downing Street, but there was not much help from that quarter, the decision being left to the Lord-Lieutenant.

My own opinion, which I gave to Lord French when discussing the matter, was that as the ostensible cause of the strike had been the failure on the part of the prison authorities to carry out their instructions, and as the Government evidently did not desire at the moment to have further complications in an already difficult situation, the solution that seemed to offer the least objection was to release the so-called political prisoners on parole. In my own mind I was quite certain that if one of the men died the release of the remainder would have been ordered by the Government, and a situation created worse than anything that might happen from their release at the moment.

Later in the day a further complication arose over the question of parole. The undertaking of the Lord Mayor that the prisoners would give their parole proved to be quite worthless, and he came running back to the Viceregal Lodge to suggest further concessions, such as the acceptance of a verbal pledge instead of one in writing. This was agreed to in order that there should be no

grounds for accusing the authorities of haggling over minor issues, and the terms of release were carefully drawn up in unmistakable language by the Law Adviser and given to Sir J. Taylor. These terms set forth that the release applied only to such persons as had been arrested under the Defence of the Realm Regulations, and against whom definite charges had not been preferred. In no case would they apply to persons awaiting trial on a definite charge, or to those who were undergoing imprisonment under sentence of a court, some of whom had gone on hunger strike ostensibly in sympathy with the political suspects, but actually, without doubt, to try their luck against the Government.

About 6 p.m. a telephone message came through to say that the first man had been released and had given his parole, but that a mistake had been made, as he was a man serving a sentence inflicted by the Recorder of Dublin for some petty crime, to whom the terms of release did not by any stretch of imagination apply. After this it seemed hopeless to expect that the simplest administrative action could be taken without somebody bungling, and one could only be thankful that any convicted prisoners remained in the gaol.

From former experience of the ways of Dublin Castle I did not expect to find anything very striking in the way of efficient organization, but before I had been in Dublin forty-eight hours I was fairly astonished at the chaos that prevailed. One, and probably the principal, cause of this, apart from the habitual absence of the Chief Secretary, was the confusion created by the false position in which the Under-Secretary, Mr. J. MacMahon had been placed. The story is a curious one, and thoroughly typical of Irish administration. In 1918 the post of Under-Secretary being vacant Mr. J. MacMahon, then Secretary to the Irish Post Office, was appointed to the office over the heads of other Irish civil servants as a concession to the Roman Catholic Church, with whom he held close relations, and in order to conciliate the Home Rule

Party, with whose political aspirations he was in sympathy. During the Chief-Secretaryship of Mr. Ian Macpherson, when a strong flavour of Orangeism pervaded the Castle administration and Catholics became objects of suspicion, MacMahon found himself outside the pale of his superiors' confidence, and was finally jockeyed out of any responsibility he may have had, while retaining the title and emoluments of the Under-Secretaryship. That he failed to assert himself at such a juncture is sufficient evidence that his selection for the appointment was in the first instance hardly a happy one. While he lived in peace and quiet, undisturbed by the turmoil that raged round the Castle, the work of his office was carried on by Sir J. Taylor, the Assistant Under-Secretary, a civil servant with a passion for centralizing everything in his own hands, whose outlook was bounded by the Castle walls, beyond which he was unable to move unless heavily escorted, a disability he shared with the Inspector-General of the R.I.C. and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

A visit to the military headquarters on the afternoon of 13th April, where I discussed the relations between the Army and the civil authorities, confirmed my impression that no effective action could be taken in Ireland until the civil administration was placed on a more businesslike footing. Having talked the matter over with several officials who were in the confidence of the Lord-Lieutenant, and who realized the invidious position in which he had been placed, I obtained his permission to write to London and ask that a small committee of experts in office administration might be sent to overhaul the various departments in the Castle.

Early in May, Sir Warren Fisher, the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, with two or three assistants went into the whole question on the spot, and as a result certain changes were made to which reference will be made later on. In the meantime MacMahon resumed the duties of his office and Sir J. Taylor proceeded on leave of absence, at the end of which he elected to retire

from official life. Had he not done so it is probable that he would have been murdered, as he was a marked man ; the gunmen, urged on by a section of the Irish press, attributing many actions to his initiative for which he was in no way responsible.

On 16th April, the Lord Mayor again paid a visit to the Viceregal Lodge to discuss with the Lord-Lieutenant the possibility of a truce on the lines that if assassination and arson ceased the police and military would desist from raiding for suspected persons. Larry O'Neill, whose only object was to get every concession possible without giving anything in return, talked a good deal about the new Bill, and the objection everybody had to the division of Ireland, without committing himself in any way.

A few days later I met the Lord Mayor at a private house in Dublin, as he thought he would lose caste with his friends if he paid too many visits to Viceregal Lodge, when he told me he had seen the constitutional heads of Sinn Fein, who were anxious for a lull, and thought they could arrange it if raids ceased. He was also in touch with certain bishops, and was hopeful that something might come of it, agreeing at the same time that the Government must retaliate for murder, and arrest all against whom there was evidence.

In the meantime he was anxious that the Government should release Cosgrave and Kelly, the actual Lord Mayor of Dublin, whose place O'Neill was keeping warm. In talking to O'Neill he always harped on the same string, that the Government should give way on every point without receiving anything in return from the other side, except a great many assurances that he would do his best, etc., assurances which it did not take many weeks to gauge the full value of.

The political activities of the Lord Mayor and his restless endeavours to stand well with all parties must have taken up much time which should have been devoted to the supervision of the city's interests. It was not, therefore, surprising to read some

years later that the Free State Government had found it necessary to transfer to a Commission the duties of the Lord Mayor and the City Council, owing to the state into which the municipal affairs had fallen.

It may be thought that these excursions into the political reserves were outside my duties as a soldier, but the situation demanded that someone who had the confidence of the Lord-Lieutenant should endeavour to find out what the world outside the confines of the Viceregal Lodge and the Castle was talking about. After the attempt on the Lord-Lieutenant's life in the previous December, it was inadvisable that he should run unnecessary risks by being seen too often in public, while many persons, like the Lord Mayor, were not over anxious to be seen visiting the Lodge for fear they might be marked down by the gunmen as upholders of the Government. The Castle officials were practically confined within its walls, and dependent for information on such reports as might filter through from sources the reverse of reliable. The Chief Secretary had not yet arrived, being busy with his election campaign.

Under these circumstances, being at that time free to move about in comparative safety, I made it my business to get into touch with as many people as possible in order to obtain a comprehensive survey of the situation, which was passed on to the Lord-Lieutenant at our daily interviews. In the course of these explorations I met all kinds and conditions of men and women from peers of the realm, legal luminaries, churchmen, including a couple of Dominican friars, one of whom evinced more constructive common sense than most people I came across, widows of rebels who had been executed, down to the impossible voluble class of person so common in Ireland, who talk without ceasing but without a suggestion of any possible cure for the evils of which they complain.

One lady whom I saw about some grievance or other, and who spent a considerable time in explaining how she was a direct



descendant of one of Cromwell's soldiers, had a very short and effective suggestion of meeting the situation. When I was able to get a word in, and asked her what she thought would be the best way of dealing with Sinn Fein, she replied without hesitation : "Shoot them all, General ; shoot them all." A very effective policy if it could have been carried to a logical conclusion. After listening to very many people's views, and I always made a point of saying as little as possible myself and expressing no opinion of my own, I came to the conclusion that the proposals of the Government as set forth in their Bill would find no support from any section of the people, but that a wider measure of self-government firmly *imposed* upon the country would find many adherents even within the ranks of Sinn Fein. The alternative was coercion, which, in view of the disintegration of the police, could only be effective if carried out as a military operation.

Lord French had asked me directly I arrived in Dublin to look into the state of the two police forces, the R.I.C. and D.M.P., and to report to him any suggestions I might have to make. From inquiries from my own Staff into the working of the military with the police, and from investigations at the police offices at the Castle, I gathered enough information to make tentative suggestions to the Lord-Lieutenant.

The Committee to which reference has already been made, which reported on the condition of the D.M.P., had suggested a drastic remodelling of the force and its amalgamation with the R.I.C., a step which could not well be carried out under the conditions that then prevailed. To take any effective steps in regard to the D.M.P. until times became more peaceful was almost impossible. In my report I emphasized the point that on the efficiency of the R.I.C. rested to a large extent the direction of future events in Ireland, because, unless martial law was enforced, the troops were merely acting when called upon in support of the civil power, when any shortcomings on the part

of the police would react in the direction of ill-considered or ill-advised action.

The report went on to suggest the appointment of an official over the heads of the present chiefs of the two forces capable of carrying out such reorganization as might under the circumstances be possible, and who would advise the Chief Secretary in all matters appertaining to police matters generally, and at the same time be in close touch with the military headquarters. My own idea was that this official should if possible be an Irishman, and a Roman Catholic, but without leanings towards any political party, possessing at the same time powers of organization and experience in handling men, especially his own countrymen.

It may be thought that such a combination could hardly be found in any one man. As a matter of fact I had in my mind's eye the one individual who combined the essentials for the post, and who after a distinguished career during the war was at the moment unemployed, Lieutenant-General Sir E. Bulfin. Most unfortunately when the appointment was offered to him some weeks later he found himself, for private reasons, unable to accept it, a misfortune I never ceased to regret for I am confident that under his guidance and control a standard of discipline would have been maintained throughout the police which would have withstood even the strain imposed by the exasperating tactics of the gunmen.

The condition of the troops in Ireland left much to be desired from the point of view of numbers and experience. Although on paper the force looked imposing, consisting of two Divisions, the Dublin District, a cavalry brigade and some young-soldier battalions, in point of fact the infantry, which were the most important and most hardly worked arm at the moment, numbered only 20,000 bayonets, being 5,000 below what my predecessor considered essential. Not only were all units under strength, but, owing to the rapid demobilization after the war, both the

junior officers and the men were young and only partially trained, most of their time being taken up in guarding Government buildings, escorting prisoners and stores, and hurrying to sudden calls for assistance to outlying police stations. While nothing could exceed the good temper and zeal displayed by the young soldiers, under conditions far more trying than actual warfare, their discipline was not always proof against the strain purposely imposed upon it by the rebels in order to provide material for propaganda.

Within a day or two of my taking over command an incident occurred at Arklow where the young troops, exasperated by the taunts of a crowd who were escorting a released hunger striker, took the law into their own hands, and in the scrimmage a civilian was shot and another wounded. Although occurrences such as this had a most soothing effect on the locality where they happened, and however much one may have sympathized with the troops knowing that the populace baited them in hopes of retaliation, it was of course essential to nip such proceedings in the bud. By the efforts and example of the senior officers this was soon done, and outbreaks on the part of the troops in the future were of rare occurrence, the few that did take place being the result of murderous and unprovoked attacks by the rebels.

A factor which increased the exasperation of the troops was the total absence of counter propaganda on the part of the Government in reply to the very efficient circulation of systematic falsehood spread broadcast by Sinn Fein and their friends in England and America. The last act of my predecessor, Sir F. Shaw, had been an appeal for further publicity. The soldier enjoys his daily paper, or, if he does not read it himself, likes hearing the news and discussing it with his pals in the coffee bar or canteen, so it can hardly be wondered if, after seeing himself and his comrades vilified and abused by the press or by the Kenworthys of Parliament, and no effort made to place the real facts before the public, he was inclined to see red when exasperated beyond endurance,

and said to himself that he would give his maligners something they could talk about. Among the officers, too, at that time there was a universal uneasiness that if they took effective measures towards the rebels they would meet the fate of General Dyer of Amritsar at the hands of the Government. I took care to let it be known that, so long as I was in the country, there would be no "Dyering" or political scapegoating for any soldier who carried out his duty with reasonable intelligence, unless I went hand-in-hand with the victim.

Let me say here that when I looked back at the end of my time in Ireland I was astonished at the self-restraint and discipline maintained by the troops during those two-and-a-half years under provocation such as no other troops in the world would have withstood, a result due to the admirable handling of the men by the General Officers commanding Divisions and districts, and all intermediate officers down to the subalterns of units, not forgetting the cheery obedience and adaptability of the men in the ranks.

A close and constant watch was kept by the Staff on every fresh phase of tactics employed by the rebels, in order to forestall them, or to counter as rapidly as possible each new development, the information being always at the service of the police forces, whose legitimate duties gradually approximated more and more towards purely military operations, for which they had little experience or training. The dilution of the R.I.C. at a later period with demobilized soldiers did not help so much as might have been expected towards increasing the efficiency of the force in dealing with the form of guerilla warfare as practised by the rebels, for the reason that the training of most ex-soldiers had been confined to trench warfare, a totally different experience to the conditions they found awaiting them in Ireland.

Reference has already been made to the woeful lack of propaganda on the part of the Government, a matter in which I could

make no effective move beyond pressing the Castle authorities to take the matter up ; but in another direction, in order that the press might be in possession of *facts* regarding military operations which had taken place, and of which garbled and incorrect accounts found their way into the papers, I arranged for an officer of the Staff at headquarters to be available to supply newspaper representatives with official reports, which they could use or not as they liked. The idea was the same as that which influenced me in the past to establish a press room at Scotland Yard. The necessity for it had occurred to me when reading in an English paper just before coming to Ireland an account of searchlights having been mounted on the Royal Hospital, which, from a military point of view, was an absurdity. On inquiring into the matter on arrival at Dublin it transpired that the so-called searchlight was merely a new signalling lamp with which experiments were being made. The little press office at headquarters remained in existence until the troops left Ireland, and under the tactful supervision of Major R. Marions was, I think, welcomed by the press, serving in a small measure to control the activities of superimaginative reporters, and to dissipate the illusion that the military authorities veiled nefarious designs under the cloak of secrecy.

Sir Hamar Greenwood arrived in Dublin on 6th May, 1920, to take up his duties as Chief Secretary, and with him came Sir Warren Fisher, with Mr. A. Cope (whose name became later notorious in connection with the " conversations " between Mr. Lloyd George and de Valera) and two other civil servants, all of whom immediately set to work to examine the method, or perhaps it would be more correct to say the want of method, of the administration prevailing at the Castle. As a result of those inquiries a very able report was drawn up by Sir Warren Fisher, from which it was clear that the whole of the Castle machinery was obsolete and out-of-date, no one from the Under-Secretary downwards being responsible even for departmental decisions, quite

apart from any attempt to share the solution of difficulties in the realm of police or of executive action—a conclusion which tallied exactly with the impression I had formed when listening to discussions at the Viceregal Lodge on my arrival in the country.

Following this report, Sir John Anderson, the chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue in London, was appointed joint Under-Secretary with Mr. MacMahon, whose retention was considered advisable as a concession to the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, and whose loyalty, apart from his Nationalist leanings, there was no valid reason to doubt, while Mr. Cope (or “Andy Cope,” the name by which he was commonly known to his acquaintances in Ireland) replaced Sir John Taylor as Assistant Under-Secretary. Several other minor appointments were filled by selected civil servants from England, and as a result when Anderson and his Staff got to work, early in June, it at last became possible to obtain decisions on questions referred to the Castle authorities within a reasonable time, a display of activity which must have sadly disturbed those official barnacles who survived, and who sighed for the good old days when all contentious matter was put aside in some convenient pigeon-hole.



## CHAPTER XVI.

THE arrival of the Chief Secretary enabled me to turn my whole attention to my legitimate work, and early in May I went over to London to consult with Henry Wilson over measures to place the Army in Ireland on a footing to enable it to cope with I.R.A. activities, which it was then clear were quite unaffected by the release of the hunger strikers, in spite of the protestations and assurances of the Lord Mayor of Dublin and others prior to the releases. While I was in London Mr. Winston Churchill discussed with me the appointment of a man to take over the control and reorganization of the Irish police. General Bulfin, the one and only man I could personally recommend as fitted in every way for the post, being unable to accept it, Mr. Churchill directed me to interview two General Officers who had been picked out by the Military Secretary, but of whose capabilities for the appointment I had no knowledge. One was ready to accept the offer at once ; the other one asked for time to consider it. The former, General Tudor, was it appeared a personal friend of Mr. Churchill, who thereupon appointed him to the post.

The situation in Ireland in the meantime was rapidly becoming worse. The policy in force from January to April, 1920, had undoubtedly had the effect of disheartening the rebels and of proportionately encouraging the police, and if the Government had been able to withstand the clamour against the detention of men against whom no charges could be preferred, and had been in a position to reinforce heavily the troops in Ireland, it is possible that the Sinn Fein extremists might have been suppressed. At



that time, May, 1920, the extremists were in a minority, the campaign of terror being carried on by fanatical youths and hired assassins, while the majority of the people, though desiring to be left in peace, were afraid to make their influence felt or even to defend themselves while arms were still in their hands.

The provision of an adequate number of troops was just what the Government was unable to accomplish, having failed apparently to take into account the force which might be required in Ireland when determining the strength of the post-war Army. Sir Henry Wilson and the Army Council did everything in their power to squeeze out troops from anywhere to reinforce the Irish garrison, but by the middle of August, 1920, the force, sufficiently imposing on paper, as representing forty battalions and seven cavalry regiments, was in reality far too weak for the work required of it, all the battalions being under strength, some of them not even able to turn out two hundred men on an emergency.

While the Government was unable to assert itself, Sinn Fein was not slow to take advantage of the situation, and from the spring of 1920 dates its rapid growth in the national sympathy. Many factors were in its favour. It had allied itself with the Irish Labour Party, and possessed at least the benevolent sympathy of Labour in Great Britain. The leaders of the 1916 rebellion had been canonized in the hearts of a large part of the population, while the failure to enforce the much-advertised conscription in 1918 had driven many waverers into the arms of Sinn Fein. Finally the release of the hunger strikers came as a fresh proof to those engaged in that popular Irish pastime of sitting on the fence that they would not be far wrong if they came to a decision to step down on the Sinn Fein side. From this time onwards, whatever might be said to the contrary, the leaders of Sinn Fein definitely adopted the policy of assassination, which was directed by the elected heads of the organization. Outside the ever-growing body of Sinn Fein sympathizers was a

comparatively small section of traditional Unionists, calling themselves loyalists, but who in my experience never raised a hand to defend themselves or their interests.

That their position was difficult and dangerous I admit, nor had they much cause to place reliance on the Government, but the fact remains that no attempt at any united effort was ever made to place their services at the disposal of the Crown. Many were the complaints that they were forced to surrender their arms and that their houses were unprotected. In the cases where arms were not given up, or were allowed to be retained for the purposes of sport, they soon disappeared to swell the I.R.A. armouries and to be used against the forces of the Crown, while to protect every house owned by a loyalist would have required an army of many hundreds of thousands of men.

The plight in which this unfortunate class found itself when Ireland was handed over to the Free State could hardly have been worse had they come forward to strike a blow against the rebels, while the services of men who were well acquainted with the country and its people would have been invaluable, and might have exercised a considerable effect on the situation. Just before the truce of 1921, arrangements had been made, after considerable difficulty, to raise a civic guard in a small town in the South, the intention being to arm the men and entrust to them the defence and preservation of order in the place. In another small town a similar organization was being worked up, but in neither of these cases was any assistance offered by loyalists of position or standing.

In order to carry out the policy laid down by the Government, instructions were issued to the troops to refrain from arresting the leaders of the I.R.A. as a punishment for outrages committed by units of that force, but to make every effort to catch the actual perpetrators of outrage by giving all possible help to the police. Searches for arms and ammunition were to continue. Mechanical transport, as it arrived from England and was distributed among

the troops, helped to further their activities, and a beginning was made to create an effective Intelligence service, filtering through from the smallest units and detachments up to the central office at G.H.Q.

As soon as the rebels began to attack and molest the troops there was no dearth of volunteers for Intelligence work, and when during the summer of 1920 authority was obtained from the War Office to enlarge and improve the whole organization little difficulty was found in obtaining keen volunteers who were already well acquainted with the localities in which they were stationed.

The principle upon which the reorganization was built up was that the Army Intelligence Service should be pushed forward as rapidly as possible until such time as the police system had been remodelled by the new Police Adviser or Chief of Police, General Tudor, who had brought with him over to Ireland an officer for the special purpose of reorganizing the moribund Intelligence branches of the two police forces.

Under the Home Rule Bill, at that time before Parliament, it was evident that the police were to remain in existence, and it therefore seemed reasonable to suppose that after they had been placed on an efficient footing the need for military Intelligence would disappear, the troops then looking to the police for such information as might be required, and transferring to them certain portions of the military Intelligence machine. In the event of martial law being proclaimed over the whole country, both the military and police systems would be merged into one organization under a Director of Intelligence on the Commander-in-Chief's Staff.

Events proved, however, in the long run that it would have been better to have relied on a purely military organization, to be placed at the service of the police, instead of attempting a dual organization, which, with the best of goodwill on both sides, never

worked altogether smoothly owing to a diversity of system and the lack of unity in control.

As in so many other matters connected with the situation at that time, the great handicap to the creation of a sound Intelligence system was the feeling of uncertainty in regard to the policy of the Government, alternating as it did between coercion and conciliation, while the rebels made no secret of the fact that they had declared war on the British Government.

The I.R.A. in the meantime had organized an efficient Intelligence service, which spread its tentacles throughout every grade of the population, hardly a house or Government office being without one or more individuals by whom information was conveyed to the proper quarter. Two powerful auxiliaries to the I.R.A. Intelligence system were the *Fianna Eireann*, the Boy Scout organization, and the *Cuman na m'Ban*, the corps of women to which reference has been already made. Each battalion of the I.R.A. was allied to a battalion of the *Fianna*, the boys acting as scouts to give warning of the approach of police or troops, and to mark down the movements of individuals selected for assassination. Of course these boys wore no uniform when employed on such work, and were indistinguishable from any of the many idle youths to be seen at all hours of the day loafing about an Irish street. More dangerous still were the girls of the *Cuman na m'Ban*, who were encouraged to consort with soldiers and police either to lure them to their doom, or to extract information about individuals who were wanted by the I.R.A.

The I.R.A. Intelligence was organized much on the same lines as our own military system, each company and battalion having an Intelligence officer whose reports passed through a brigade Intelligence officer to the central office at Dublin, which was presided over by Mr. E. J. Duggan, a lawyer who later became a member of the Free State Cabinet. The selection of a lawyer to be the head of the Intelligence branch was a wise move

on the part of the I.R.A. authorities, because he was able to distribute his reports and records among his professional files, or in his clients' deed boxes, and thus minimize the chances of discovery by raiding parties of troops and police. As the I.R.A. Director of Intelligence, the blood of many an innocent man must lie at the door of Mr. Duggan.

A valuable source of information to Sinn Fein were their informers scattered throughout the police and the Government offices in Dublin. These men, mostly of the same social class as the rebels, were many of them in sympathy with Sinn Fein, and any want of sympathy in a man who might give useful information was met by intimidation. In the military offices it was not easy for the I.R.A. informers to obtain a footing, but even there one or two cases were discovered of men who had enlisted for the express purpose of acting as agents to the rebels.

Among the civilian personnel employed in military workshops there were undoubtedly men who, when occasion served, gave information to the I.R.A. Attempts to bribe soldiers to give information, to sell arms, or to procure the release of prisoners met with little success, the soldiers in many cases turning the tables on those who endeavoured to seduce them from their loyalty. In one case bribing was successful in securing the escape of a man condemned to death. It was a slight consolation to know that after the truce this man became a thorn in the side of his Sinn Fein brethren.

Another advantage in Intelligence work possessed by Sinn Fein over the British authorities was the summary disposal of spies or suspected spies. They were shot out of hand, and in some cases were perfectly innocent men. The ruthless and rapid execution of any man against whom existed the vaguest suspicion, and the enforcement of strict sobriety among all men working for Sinn Fein, were the factors mainly responsible for the difficulty in

obtaining information in regard to the inner working of that body and the kindred rebel societies.

As an adjunct to their Intelligence system was the propaganda branch of Sinn Fein, an organization as efficient as it was powerful, and one against which at no time was any effort worth recording made by the British Government. Propaganda being entirely outside my province, I lost no time in drawing Sir Hamar Greenwood's attention to the importance of taking steps to counter the most effective arm in the hands of the rebels. On 22nd May, 1920, I wrote to the Chief Secretary drawing his attention to a leaflet called *The Irish Bulletin*, issued by Sinn Fein broadcast, but especially to the French and American press, and urging that something should be done by way of a counterblast, "sticking to essentials, and contradicting evident mis-statements, or supplying them with a context which would alter the whole atmosphere." This cry I repeated constantly up to the time when hostilities ceased, but little came of it.

A gentleman was later imported from London into the Castle to give out news, and I believe to plant literature here and there among the press, a good move in its way, but far short of what was required. The Chief Secretary himself on occasions did his best to beat the propaganda drum in the House of Commons in defence of the police and soldiers, but unfortunately his superabundant energy so often carried him beyond the boundaries of fact that he soon became as one crying in the wilderness, and in no way weakened the case as put forward by Erskine Childers and other nimble and unscrupulous propagandists on the Sinn Fein side. What was required was a man to do for the Government and its servants in Ireland what Lord Northcliffe did for the Allies during the European War, and so far as I am aware no serious effort was ever made in that direction.

In the meantime during May, 1920, the rebels, as if to show their contempt for the Home Rule Bill and for the leniency in

releasing the hunger strikers from Mountjoy Gaol, increased both the number and scope of their outrages, the R.I.C. being the special object of their attention. Ambushes consisting of men posing as simple labourers attacked small police patrols, roads were blocked by felled trees and stones in places where police or military lorries were expected, telegraph and telephone wires were cut, and in certain places trains were held up and boarded by armed men, who removed the mails.

Concurrently with these more ambitious efforts, the murdering of individual policemen, ex-soldiers, loyalists, and any person suspected of being opposed to Sinn Fein became an almost daily occurrence, together with the destruction of vacated police barracks. Attacks on barracks still occupied by the police were found by the rebels to be undertakings too perilous to be indulged in often, especially when by means of increased mechanical transport military assistance was more rapidly forthcoming than had been formerly the case, with the result that towards the middle of June, 1920, this form of enterprise became less and less frequent.

A less perilous form of advertisement was the destruction of coastguard stations round the coast. These places, inhabited by a few elderly coastguards and their families, were generally situated in out-of-the-way places, difficult of access and far removed from stations held by police or troops, nor were they of any importance in so far as the restoration of order was concerned. Theoretically the coastguards should have acted as deterrents to any attempted landing of arms, but in practice they were helpless, even to the extent of sending information to the nearest military station because the telegraph or telephone wires would be destroyed before any landing was attempted. In this respect the Southern Irish were unlikely to neglect any precautions which had previously been taken by their countrymen of the North when engaged in gun-running. A proposal was made by the Admiralty that the defence of the coastguard stations should be

taken over by the Army, which I declined to entertain, as, irrespective of the difficulties of supply, there were not sufficient troops available for the duties required of them, quite apart from garrisoning out-of-the-way places whose existence from a military standpoint was immaterial. A number of these stations were raided, some burnt, and in no case was any attempt at defence made.

Later on the Admiralty despatched a couple of battalions of marines to hold those coastguard stations which were deemed of most importance. Lighthouses also attracted the attention of the I.R.A., their capture offering no element of danger, while their destruction only emphasized to the whole world the total disregard of human life in the craze for wholesale destruction that was throughout a distinctive feature of the rebels' plan of campaign. If every light round the coasts of Ireland had been extinguished the only effect would have been to drive trade from the island without interfering in any way with the activities of the police and troops.

Towards the latter part of May, 1920, the well-known Irish pastime of cattle-driving became prevalent, but means were soon found to put an effective stop to it. Enclosures on the principle of the village "pounds" in England were established, and whenever a cattle-drive occurred all cattle found on the land which had been driven were rounded up by the cavalry into a "pound," where they were kept for a certain time until claimed, when the applicant had to pay a fine before recovering his beasts. As claimants would have to give their names and addresses, and thus proclaim themselves passive if not active participators in the driving of their neighbours' cattle, few claims were made and the cattle were eventually disposed of for the benefit of the State. From this time forward cattle-driving gave little trouble except in certain remote districts.

In another direction also the I.R.A. were hoist by their own



petard. It was noticed that whenever the military authorities inspected a house or building it was invariably burnt down on the assumption that it was required for the accommodation of troops or police. Arrangements were, therefore, made to examine somewhat ostentatiously Sinn Fein halls in towns and villages, many of which were promptly burnt down by the rebels, although there was never any intention of using them by the forces of the Crown.

At the end of May, 1920, the question of martial law for Ireland came forward, but the Government preferred to await the result of the more mobile employment of the troops, which had become possible by the increase of mechanical transport, and to consider recourse if necessary to more drastic powers in the hands of the Irish Executive. Although this was the first occasion since I assumed command of the troops in Ireland that the imposition of martial law had been broached, proposals in that direction had been previously made more than once by the Lord-Lieutenant. My own view at the time can be recorded in a few words. I should have welcomed the imposition of martial law over the whole country, and should have been ready to assume full responsibility for it, but I knew that the Army Council were not able to provide the troops which were necessary to make martial law effective, and unless the Government were prepared to take the country with them in the matter I was certain that the policy would be reversed before it had been many weeks in force.

When six months later a form of martial law was sanctioned for Munster it was, as will be shown, so intermixed with civil administration as to be hardly recognizable. From first to last the people of Great Britain were ignorant of the real facts of the situation as it existed in Ireland from 1919 onwards, and it could, therefore, hardly be expected that they would support the imposition of martial law, even to a reasonable degree of severity, until the full facts of the case had been laid before them.

In consequence of two small detachments of troops during the month of June, 1920, being held up by innocent-looking civilians, orders were issued that all troops when on duty were to consider themselves as on active service, and to use their weapons with effect regardless of results.

A far greater difficulty to cope with was the risk run by officers and men when not on duty, especially in towns such as Dublin and Cork. Officers were ordered to carry revolvers, or automatic pistols, at all times whether in uniform or plain clothes, and commanding officers of units were held responsible that every officer practised with his weapon until he became a quick and accurate shot. This, and an instruction that officers should always go about in twos and threes, proved effective precautions, unless, as happened in one or two cases, officers carried their arms in such a way that they could not be easily got at. My own practice, and one I impressed on those about me, was always to have my automatic on my knee when motoring, and in the right hand pocket of my coat when walking about the Phoenix Park or in the town. In Ireland an automatic pistol became as constant and as friendly a companion as a watch.

The protection of the non-commissioned officers and men was a far more difficult problem. To have ordered them to go about armed with rifles when off duty would have helped in no way, a rifle being an impossible weapon of defence against a pistol in a crowded street. The result could only have been a greater loss of life through attempts by the rebels to obtain the men's arms. A slight safeguard was the fear of the rebels that the comrades of murdered soldiers might take the law into their own hands and exact a heavy vengeance. As a rule unarmed soldiers were unmolested when walking about the streets, or at places of amusement, although in a few instances they were murdered. Several times I was urged by members of the Government to confine troops to barracks, a policy I steadily declined to entertain.

The suggestion came, of course, from those who had no experience of handling men, or of the strain imposed on nerves and tempers by wholesale confinement to barracks even for a short time. The effects of a lengthy confinement in the Castle was painfully evident among some of the civilian Staff, who were reduced to a state of nerves that it was pitiable to behold. Further, such a move would have been a triumph for the rebels, who would naturally have attributed it to fear. One honourable and gallant member of the House of Commons inquired why troops did not carry their bayonets as a protection when out walking, a question which gave us some amusement over in Ireland, and set us wondering whether the gallant Colonel thought that a bayonet was a species of firearm.

Many a time I urged that some members of the Cabinet should take a trip to Dublin, if only to gather some idea of the atmosphere of the place of which they, together with every person who had not crossed the Channel, were in complete ignorance. From the way people talked in England it was evident that the general idea was that the police and troops were serving under conditions akin to those of war. Nothing was further from the truth. In war the soldier has a well-defined objective ; he knows his enemy when he sees him, and he is alive to the precautions to be taken in the danger zone. When withdrawn from the fighting line he is free, apart from air raids and long-distance shelling, to do what he pleases in safety, and his nervous system is relieved from the strain of the forward zone.

In Ireland, on the other hand, there was never an hour of the day or night when a soldier or policeman might not be in danger of his life—there was no “off time.” When in barracks he might at any moment be called on for some duty, when on guard any quiet-looking civilian passing by might suddenly open fire on him with some species of firearm. The same might happen when marching in a town or in the country, and when off duty

he could never be sure that an attempt might not be made on his life, or that he might not be the recipient of a stray bullet intended for some other victim. From the General Officers down to the last-joined drummer boy there was no hour of the twenty-four during which a man could enjoy a feeling of peaceful security. Yet, in spite of this, officers and men never for a moment lost their cheery optimism or determination to get their own back on their treacherous opponents.

What rankled most deeply in the mind of every soldier was the failure of the Government to place the true facts before the public, and to check the licence of politicians and a large section of the press in their abuse and misrepresentation of the efforts of the Crown forces within the limited scope permitted by the policy in force at the time. These same feelings, together with the escape of so many of the murderers of their comrades, went a long way towards undermining the discipline of the police, and that the same result did not overtake the Army was due to the example and efforts of the regimental officers, in spite of their patience being often only too sorely tried.

One of the great assets on the side of Sinn Fein was the deliberation and delay on the part of those responsible for the transaction of the legal business of the Irish Government, partly, no doubt, due to the continual absence of the Irish Attorney-General in London. Time and again the efforts of the police and soldiers, often undertaken at the risk of their lives, were stultified either by delays in the giving of decisions, or by points of law of an intricacy far too involved to be applicable to the state of affairs in Ireland, and entirely beyond the comprehension of those who risked their lives to bring culprits to justice. It can hardly be wondered if there were times when these men itched to take the law into their own hands.

I have already referred to the increased mobility of the troops by the provision of motor transport, and their consequent ability

to get on more even terms with the I.R.A. in outlying districts. About the middle of May, 1920, however, the dock labourers belonging to the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union threw in their lot with Sinn Fein and refused to handle military stores, an example followed by the railway staffs of the Southern Irish lines. These strikes delayed the activities of the troops for several months, the work at the docks falling upon fatigue parties of soldiers, and much of the motor transport which should have been employed on tactical work being diverted to supplying stations which had been cut off by the railway strike. This state of affairs, lasting over six months, was a serious set-back to military activities during the best season of the year.

During a trip to London in the latter part of May, 1920, I found no indication of any definite line of policy. The same talk held the field about pushing forward the Home Rule Bill in case it should be thought the Government was weakening, but that a bargain might be struck if, and when, the Government gained the upper hand, an unlikely consummation in view of the dearth of trained troops and the open offer of the Prime Minister to treat with the rebels, a gesture which was accepted by the Irish as a sign of weakness and an encouragement to continue their efforts.

Just at this moment Londonderry had broken out into one of those periodical outbursts for which that city has long been celebrated, occasioning much anxiety in Downing Street circles, more especially among politicians who had been prominent in pro-Ulster activities in the years when this province pointed the road to rebellion to its brethren of the South.

On 26th June, 1920, the rebels opened up a new line of attack by kidnapping a brigade commander and two other officers. The three officers, relying on the fact that up to date no outrages had been committed on officers engaged in sport, had gone for a few

days' fishing in the vicinity of Fermoy. On returning in the evening to the cottage where they were staying they found it in possession of rebels, who put them in motor cars and drove off. One of the officers, in attempting to escape from a car, was wounded and left on the road with the third officer, the brigade commander being taken off to an unknown destination. He eventually escaped some five weeks later, and meeting an Army lorry had the satisfaction of beating off an attack by the rebels, killing and wounding several of them.

Directly I heard of this capture I proposed to the Chief Secretary that six of the leading members of the I.R.A. Cork Brigade should be arrested and held as hostages for my Brigadier's safety, a line of action that would have had the additional advantage of satisfying the men of the brigade that prompt steps had been taken to counter the attack on their Commander. The Chief Secretary and his advisers, however, objected to the proposal on the ground that there would be no evidence to implicate the men who might be arrested with the kidnapping, and also that they might go on hunger strike. So, as an alternative, it was decided to organize a "drive" with all available troops, and make a systematic search for the missing officer. It had been ascertained that the kidnapping was not ordered by the Headquarters of the I.R.A. at Dublin, but was done by the I.R.A. representatives in the South. The troops at Fermoy, infuriated by the capture of their Brigadier, took toll on the town of Fermoy, smashing windows and killing a man. Had instant steps been taken to arrest prominent Sinn Feiners this would not have happened, as the troops would have been satisfied that the authorities were not taking the insult lying down.

This was but another example of the futility of relying on the civil power to quell a rebellion. Although a letter had been received in the meantime from the kidnapped officer asking that no efforts should be made to trace him, and implying that his

life would be endangered if this was attempted, the Government decided that the "drive" should be proceeded with. This was accordingly done, but no trace of the officer was found. To the civilian mind in Whitehall that a senior officer should be kidnapped appeared as a heinous offence on his part, and I was obliged to defend him against the wrath of the Secretary of State by pointing out that though it was certainly thoughtless on the part of the officer to endeavour to wile away the monotony of existence by indulging in sport, it had to be remembered that under the situation as it existed no official, civil or military, was exempt from the same fate, nor would they be until such time as the Government chose to recognize that the country was in a state of war.

Happily, as I have already said, the officer eventually escaped unhurt, but had this not been the case the responsibility would have rested on the Cabinet, who overruled my decision to cancel the "drive" after the receipt of the officer's letter. From this it resulted that the Secretary of State was pressed by the Army Council definitely to clear up the position of all officers in Ireland and to say whether, the country not being at war, they were to be confined to barracks and deprived of all recreation, or to be escorted whenever they left their places of security, a contingency which would necessitate a considerable increase to the garrison. Naturally no decision was ever received on these points, the idea of declaring war on the I.R.A. being no part of the policy of the Government, even though it would result in safeguarding their servants.

Early in July, 1920, the Chief Secretary endeavoured to secure co-operation in his task of coping with rebellion from such sections of the population as might be upholders of law and order, but the appeal met with little or no response even from the Southern loyalists. Many persons were prolific in suggestions, but none were prepared to follow up suggestions with action.

During July, 1920, the I.R.A. campaign against the troops

became more marked, and information came to hand that this was part of a settled policy to irritate the soldiers in the hope that they would retaliate, and thus afford material for increased propaganda, in which I.R.A. outrages would be represented as justifiable reprisals. With the exception of a few—a very few—English papers, the press as a whole played up to this move on the part of Sinn Fein, who took good care to make life unpleasant for any correspondent who supplied their papers with impartial copy.

One of the reforms which had been introduced into the police organization by General Tudor was the appointment of Divisional Commissioners to groups of counties for the purpose of supervising and instructing the County Inspectors in the more military duties which had fallen to the lot of the R.I.C. These Divisional Commissioners were, in the first instance, principally officers or ex-officers of the Army with good war records. Among them was a Colonel Smyth, an officer who had lost an arm in the war, and who by his energy and enthusiasm did much to restore the prestige of the R.I.C. in his area. On 17th July, 1920, this officer was sitting in the smoking-room of the Cork County Club, chatting with County Inspector Craig, when a party of rebels forced their way into the club, and before Smyth could draw his revolver shot him dead, at the same time wounding the County Inspector. As usual, the murderers walked quietly away, nor would any person, and there were several who had seen them, come forward to assist in their identification.

For some time before this event a dead set had been made in *The Freeman's Journal* against Colonel Smyth, every step taken by him to improve the morale and efficiency of the police being distorted into an act of outrage and brutality. It was not the first time that the press, under the guidance of the murder gang, had directed the aim of the assassins' weapons. In the case of Mr. Bell, previously mentioned, his murder was preceded by a torrent of abuse and vituperation. In the case of Colonel Smyth,



those who directed the campaign of assassination carefully prepared the ground by painting him in the blackest colours in their servile press. Unfortunately, all representations to the Irish Government to take steps towards a reasonable control of the press were unavailing, and at a later date, when, after infinite trouble, a conviction was obtained against this same paper, *The Freeman's Journal*, orders were received from Downing Street that the sentence should be remitted, a decision which aroused disgust and contempt in the hearts of those who were risking their lives for the policy of the Government.

Colonel Smyth's murder was followed up by attacks on troops in the city of Cork, which lasted several days, but were put a stop to by a salutary lesson inflicted on the rebels, who suffered considerable loss. As a result of these outbreaks the "curfew" was imposed on Cork, and on other towns in Munster, where it continued, with variations in the hours during which it was enforced, until the truce in July, 1921. It was often assumed that by the imposition of the curfew no one except soldiers or police could be out and about the streets of a town. This was far from being the case. Apart from certain persons to whom passes were issued, there was little to stop ill-disposed persons from moving about, as the number of police and soldiers available for patrol work was limited and could by no possibility ensure strict compliance with the regulations. Persons when found wandering about after curfew hour were arrested, and if the breaking of curfew restrictions was their only offence were released the following day on payment of a small fine. Sinn Fein propaganda was always insistent on the fact that outrages within curfew hours could only be committed by police or soldiers, an absurd contention seeing that there was nothing to prevent any person who liked to run the risk from being out and about, the risk on dark nights being small. All soldiers, and generally policemen, were accounted for in their barracks after dark.

The increased activity on the part of the I.R.A. did not improve the relations between the inhabitants and the troops. Up to that time the troops, with their habitual happy-go-lucky temperament, had been inclined to look on the natives as fools rather than knaves, but from this time forward they began to awaken to the fact that they were living in an atmosphere of treachery and assassination. An attempt to institute a general boycott, especially in the smaller towns and villages, against the police and military was very soon put a stop to by requisitioning goods when purchase was refused. As a matter of fact, it was rarely that requisitioning had to be enforced, because the ordinary Irishman's patriotism is hardly proof against his desire for gain.

In all this turmoil and bloodshed Sinn Fein did not lose sight of the constructive policy of Arthur Griffith, to which allusion has been made. So-called arbitration courts, under a Ministry of Home Affairs, were established in twenty-eight counties, which little by little monopolized the functions of the Government courts of law, so that barristers and solicitors assisted at their sittings, and not infrequently loyalists even appealed to their jurisdiction. A police force was created which functioned whenever the R.I.C. or soldiers were not in evidence. The Local Government Board of Dail Eireann circularized county and district rural councils to pass resolutions of loyalty to Dail Eireann in order to impress foreign Governments through the activities of the Sinn Fein representatives to foreign capitals, who gave interviews to the press of the countries where they had installed themselves, and explained how Sinn Fein, with its Army, its law courts, its police, and Local Government Board, were in reality the rulers of Ireland—a gospel which, thanks to the failure of counter-propaganda on the part of the British Government, was firmly believed in by many people on the Continent.

The impossibility of securing convictions in the civil courts,

and the restriction of courts-martial to deal only with such offences as were covered by the Defence of the Realm Regulations, enabled the Sinn Fein courts to proceed unmolested until the powers of the military were strengthened by the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act of August, 1920. If Sinn Fein courts had been confined to questions of arbitration, good rather than harm would have resulted, for from all accounts their methods were generally fair if drastic, and there was little ambiguity in the carrying-out of their decrees. But there was another side to these so-called courts. They claimed to "try" persons who were reported to be enemies of Sinn Fein. At these mock trials the accused person was not, of course, present, nor were there any means, or desire, of substantiating accusations, however wild, that might be brought forward. In due course some policeman, or innocent peasant, against whom an informer had a grudge would be found murdered, as a record of I.R.A. justice.

It was illuminating some years later to read that the Free State Government had introduced a Bill to legalize the decisions and sentences of these so-called "military tribunals" from January, 1919, to June, 1922. Surely a very parody of justice.

Very different were the long-drawn-out proceedings of the British courts before which rebels were called to account, with every facility for defence, followed by a most minute examination by lights of the legal profession to ensure that no flaw could be found in the proceedings. Even at the few "drum-head" courts-martial which were held when martial law was in force in the South, no man could suffer the capital punishment unless clear and irrefutable evidence was before the court that he had been guilty of the crime with which he was charged.

Four fresh battalions arrived before the end of June, and owing to serious faction fighting at Londonderry and the approach of "Orange Day," the 12th July, a day almost always celebrated

by fanatical outbursts in the North, the Army Council managed to make three more battalions available for Ulster.

Although, as I have already said, I was against the imposition of martial law for the reason that the troops available were not sufficiently numerous to ensure its effective application, and that in my own mind I was convinced that the Government would be unable to maintain it until such time as they had the country behind them in the matter (which, judging by the English press, was far from being the case), the situation both in the North and South was so serious in July, 1920, that I felt constrained to put forward tentative proposals to the effect that martial law, even with the qualification of being only partially effective, would give slightly increased powers in dealing with the elements of disorder. The Government, however, decided that, though such a course was not advisable, steps should be taken to enlarge the powers of the military under the Defence of the Realm Regulations by the introduction of fresh legislation, to which eventually, in the middle of August, 1920, effect was given in the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act.

To carry out the more vigorous policy indicated by the Cabinet early in July, a policy still based on the assumption that the military would continue to act in aid of the civil power, a further reinforcement of troops consisting of three battalions was despatched to Ireland. This, together with the despatch of a complete Divisional Staff from Aldershot, enabled me to reorganize the command on lines better suited than heretofore to meet the situation and to render more effective aid to the hardly pressed police.

Under the new organization the troops were distributed as follows :—

1st Division (Belfast) :

15th Brigade .....	3 battalions
Londonderry Brigade .....	4 battalions

## 5th Division (Curragh):

Galway Brigade .....	1 battalion
	2 cavalry regiments
13th Brigade (Athlone) .....	3 battalions
	1 cavalry regiment
14th Brigade (Curragh) .....	3 battalions
	1 cavalry regiment

## 6th Division (Cork):

18th Brigade (Limerick) .....	4 battalions
	1 cavalry regiment
Kerry Brigade .....	2 battalions
17th Brigade (Cork) .....	5 battalions
	1 cavalry regiment
16th Brigade (Fermoy) .....	5 battalions

## Dublin District:

24th Brigade .....	5 battalions
25th Brigade .....	5 battalions
	1 cavalry regiment.

It must be remembered that this force, which on paper looks formidable, was in reality hardly greater than one Division at war strength, owing to the numerical weakness of nearly all the infantry battalions.

The wider distribution of the troops, together with the closer supervision exercised by the increased brigade headquarters, and the additional mechanical transport soon had the effect of reducing the activities of the rebels so far as attacks on police barracks and ambushes on a large scale were concerned, though the murder of individuals still remained at a high figure and characterized by the usual barbarity.

A perusal of the records of the outrages committed at this time show that in nearly every case where resistance was made, even by single individuals, the rebels though always in superior numbers took to their heels, their objective only being attained when they succeeded in killing or wounding their victim unawares, or when he was without means of defence or retaliation. It often

happened that one shot from a revolver was sufficient to scare a party of armed men.

In attacks on police barracks the rebels, though always in overwhelming numbers, were curiously unsuccessful. Between the beginning of May, 1920, and the 11th July of the same year only in two attacks out of fourteen did the rebels succeed in driving the police from their barracks, in both of which the buildings were set on fire.

By the middle of the summer of 1920 the flow of recruits into the R.I.C. began to make itself felt. Recruiting for the force in Ireland having practically ceased, owing to the terrorism exercised by the I.R.A. on intending recruits or on their relations, the Chief Secretary decided to strengthen the force by ex-soldiers from Great Britain, many of whom were only too glad to avail themselves of the high rates of pay which were offered. Owing to the difficulty of clothing these recruits in the dark-green uniform of the R.I.C., and the necessity of utilizing their services as soon as possible, they were fitted out in khaki service-dress obtained from the Army authorities, with the dark-green caps and black leather belts of the R.I.C. Hence the title "Black and Tans," a name which will long be remembered in the Island of the Saints.

The men were good material, but many had little military training beyond what was required for trench warfare on the Western front during the war, which was of little use to them when up against the methods of the I.R.A. The majority of the officers under whom they served belonged to the R.I.C., and had scant experience in handling at short notice the class of man who was enrolled, nor, where discipline was concerned, had they as police officers the powers necessary to control the more turbulent spirits. The powers of a police officer over his men are practically confined to dismissal from the force or the infliction of fines, punishments which, while adequate for men who propose to take up police work as a lifelong profession with the expectation of a

pension at the end, were insufficient to control men who knew that their service in the force would be limited to a year or two.

For crimes which were too serious to be dealt with by dismissal or fine, men were liable to the civil law of the land, but to bring a Black and Tan, or indeed any member of the Crown forces, before an Irish jury would have been to condemn him in advance. As soon as the presence of these new recruits was felt in Ireland they became the object of an intensified campaign of assassination on the part of the I.R.A., with the result that the somewhat feeble bonds of police discipline becoming loosened the men took the law into their own hands to an extent which in time gave cause for anxiety both to the Government and to those who were responsible for the force.

As policemen they were useless. The value of a policeman lies in his knowledge of a locality and its inhabitants, of which the R.I.C. recruits were necessarily ignorant. Nor could they obtain much help on these points from the old R.I.C. with whom they served, because for some time past it had become necessary to move the police from place to place to prevent their becoming marked men in any particular locality.

It would have been far better in the long run, and cheaper to the State, if the R.I.C. had been allowed to remain as they were and steps had been taken to raise a dozen special battalions for service in Ireland from the men who eventually became Black and Tans. At a rate of pay higher than the ordinary rates, and for a limited period, it would have been easy at that time to obtain men, nor would there have been any difficulty in controlling them under the powers of the Army Act.

From the spring of 1920 until the truce in 1921 the police in Ireland were to all intents and purposes carrying out, or attempting to carry out, purely military duty, and the remains of the R.I.C. would have been amply sufficient to uphold the illusion of the civil power for the purpose of carrying out the policy of the Govern-



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FIELD-MARSHAL SIR HENRY WILSON





ment. A proposal such as I have indicated was brought forward, but the policy of reinforcing the R.I.C. held the field. Towards the end of the summer a new branch of police organization was introduced by the Chief Secretary in the shape of companies of ex-officers, of which a dozen or more were raised. They were known as the Auxiliary Police, and were composed of men who had received commissions during the war and were for the most part out of employment. They can best be described as a tough lot. Those companies that had the good fortune to have good commanders, generally ex-Regular officers, who could control their men, performed useful work, but the exploits of certain other companies under weak or inefficient commanders went a long way to discredit the whole force.

It was not long before the local poets celebrated the advent of this new force, and small boys about the streets of Dublin might be heard chanting verses such as the following :—

Said Lloyd George to Macpherson, " I'll give you the sack,  
To manage old Ireland you haven't the knack.  
I'll send over Greenwood, he's a much stronger man,  
And we'll fill up the Green Isle with the bold Black and Tan."

He sent them all over to pillage and loot,  
To burn down the houses and inmates to shoot;  
" To reconquer Ireland," says he, " is my plan,  
With Macready and Co. and his bold Black and Tan."

The poet had evidently fallen into an error, very common in Ireland, in thinking that the police were under my authority. The whole of the police force in Ireland, with the exception of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, who had entirely dropped out of the picture, were armed with rifles, bayonets, and revolvers, and by degrees were provided with motor transport and armoured cars on a scale in excess of that of the Army. A mistaken idea was prevalent in some quarters that the police and military were working under the direction of one central authority. This unfortunately was never the case, nor, even when at the end of

1920 martial law was declared in Munster, were the police in that province entirely under the control of the Military Governor. Police activities were directed by the Police Adviser to the Chief Secretary, those of the Army by the Divisional Generals under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, and while every effort was made to co-operate with the police the task was at times one of no little difficulty, on account of the conservative ideas of many police officers who were unable to understand that methods which had been effective in former times, and under different conditions, were inapplicable to the situation created by Sinn Fein. This conservatism was not confined to police officers, for I noticed an inclination among members of the Government, who had held the office of Chief Secretary many years before Sinn Fein was heard of, to lay down the law on the assumption that the state of affairs was the same as in their day.

As the pressure by the police and troops became greater, so did the efforts of the I.R.A. to keep themselves before the public and to encourage their adherents. Towards the middle of July the General Post Office at Dublin was raided and the military mail removed. The place was not guarded; indeed, it would have been a waste of men to do so, seeing that practically the whole of the employees were in sympathy with the rebels. The object of securing mails was in order to mark down victims through their correspondence, and many a life was lost through information gained by raids on post offices, mail trains, or mail carts. The attention of the civil authorities was many times called to the disloyalty of the Post Office staff throughout the country, but nothing was done to check the danger. Official correspondence and certain private mails were brought over to Ireland daily by special messenger, generally a naval officer, who seemed to enjoy the trip.

It is curious to note that all through the worst troubles in Ireland racing went on as if the crack of a revolver had never been

heard in the land, but at one time the rebels began to interfere with officers who did not see why they should not have their share of enjoyment. After consulting several of the principal racing men, I let it be known that on the next occasion on which any soldier was interfered with, either at or going to or coming from a race meeting, I would shut down racing throughout the country. The word went round and no further incidents occurred.

Towards the end of July, 1920, Mr. Bonar Law made a statement in the House of Commons to the effect that the situation was well in hand, on which he may have been primed by the Chief Secretary, whose forcible and exaggerated optimism did not tend to enlighten members on the true state of affairs. Although the situation had improved during July, there was a long way to go before it could be said to be in hand, and most unfortunately during August, 1920, just as troops and police were getting into their stride, and at a time of the year most favourable to operations, the work was partly paralysed by orders to hold ten battalions ready for instant despatch to England on account of the coal-miners' strike. For three months these battalions remained concentrated, and, although they did not cross the Channel, their activities were limited to the immediate vicinity of their stations, nor could they be used for more extended operations.

The threatened descent of Archbishop Mannix on Ireland about this time did not help to pour oil on the troubled waters, and we were all devoutly thankful that the Government did not waver in their decision to keep that turbulent priest out of the island, as his appearance in Ireland would assuredly have resulted in increased bloodshed.

During the month of August, 1920, two events occurred which served to encourage the Crown forces in their efforts to cope with the rebellion—the first, the arrest of Terence McSwiney and the consequent collapse of hunger-striking as a weapon against the Government; the second, the introduction of the Restoration of

Order in Ireland Act. McSwiney, who was arrested with eleven other officers of the I.R.A. on 12th August, 1920, was the Lord Mayor of Cork and the Commander of the 1st Cork Brigade of the I.R.A. To those who were acquainted with the circumstances of his arrest and of his responsibility for outrages in the area over which he held sway, the hysterical outbursts of a portion of the English public and press were inexplicable but for the explanation that such persons supported the cold-blooded assassination of their own countrymen.

In McSwiney's possession was found an order to construct a bomb factory, and a key to the police cipher code, the possession of which alone involved the death of countless men. In addition he was proved to have confirmed a so-called sentence of death on two men of the R.I.C., in other words, to have ordered their assassination, which was duly carried out, and at his trial he warned the court that its members were liable to arrest by the I.R.A., which was merely an incitement to his friends to murder them. As is well known, he finally succumbed at Brixton Prison, after a presumed fast of seventy-five days.

At a later date, a letter was found from his sister, Miss Mary McSwiney, asking the rebel executive in Dublin to release her brother from his hunger strike, a request which evidently was refused. The firmness of the Government in this case was the deathblow to hunger-striking in Ireland from that time forward. The prisoners in Cork Prison had all followed McSwiney's lead, and three of them died after a longer abstinence than their leader, but there is little doubt that they obtained from time to time small quantities of nourishment from the warders and other sources.

Until August, 1920, the civil power in Ireland was operating with the ordinary law of the land, reinforced by the Defence of the Realm Regulations, which had been effective throughout Great Britain during the Great War. It was, however, found that these powers were insufficient to deal with the situation which had

developed in Ireland, and that if the proclamation of martial law was to be avoided measures must be taken to strengthen the hand of the executive. To this end the Restoration of Order in Ireland Bill was brought forward, and on 9th August, 1920, became law.

Under this Act the King in Council could continue to issue regulations under the Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act, 1914, for the maintenance of order in Ireland, and it was further provided that under such regulations courts-martial and military courts were empowered to try persons for treason, treason felony, felony, and other lesser offences. Additional powers were given to courts-martial for the infliction of fines, and the compelling of persons to attend as witnesses.

Two further important points brought out under the new Act were the substitution of military courts of inquiry for coroners' inquests, which had become a mere farce through the length and breadth of the land, and the exclusion of the public from courts on the application of the prosecutor, a necessary protection from the gunmen for both the members of a court and witnesses. In order that there should be no failure of justice in courts dealing with any crime punishable by death it was provided that one member of such courts must be a person certified by the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, or by the Lord Chief Justice of England, to be a person of legal knowledge and experience.

The regulations under the Act became familiarly known as R.O.I.R. as distinct from D.O.R.A., so well known to most people during the Great War. Its weakness lay in the fact that although the powers of courts were strengthened, no amount of legislation could ensure the production of evidence upon which a court could convict, if such evidence was dependent on civilian witnesses.

About the same time the first move was taken towards the creation of an Ulster Special Constabulary, the Government having been disturbed by the rioting which had lately taken place

in the North, and by the possibility of having to move troops from Ireland on account of labour trouble in England. The underlying idea was that the creation of a Constabulary in Ulster would free the troops in that province for duty elsewhere, a contingency I did not anticipate, feeling that as the Constabulary would necessarily be confined to Protestants, it would, unless under the strictest control, probably sow the seeds of civil war between North and South and necessitate the intervention of the Army. However, Sir James Craig appeared hopeful on the subject, and Mr. Churchill, taking it up with his customary enthusiasm, was inclined to be annoyed with me because I could not see eye-to-eye with him on the subject.

That my fears were not the result of prejudice, but were shared by a distinguished Ulsterman who realized the danger, is evidenced by the following letter of Sir Henry Wilson :—

14th September, 1920.

" My Dear Make Ready,\*

Many thanks for yours of yesterday. I have read your note to Hamar Greenwood, and I agree with every word you have written. To arm those ' Black Men ' in the North without putting them under discipline is simply inviting trouble. I think with you if anything of that sort has to be done it would be better to do what I suggested some time ago, which was, to bring in the Home Rule Bill in so far as the six counties are concerned, then let the local Government of Ulster raise their police force and begin to carry out the work which the Home Rule Bill apparently means that they are to do. Short of that, and if your proposal for Special Reserve battalions is impossible—and I am sure it is—then simply to arm a lot of ' Black North ' on the chance of their keeping order is childish and worse.

H."

Replying to this I wrote on 15th September :—

" I heard from Bainbridge† to-day, and he tells me that the ' loyalists ' won't work with the police unless someone can change

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\* Henry Wilson hardly ever addressed his intimate friends by their names, labelling them with nicknames of his own invention.

† Major-General Sir Guy Bainbridge, K.C.B. Commanding at that time the troops in Ulster.

their point of view. Several suggestions have been made to him that he should take the police off military lorries and away from parties of soldiers in Belfast, and that the police should be replaced by 'loyal citizens' who would act as guides and instructors as to who was bad and who was good! This just shows, what you and I know, what they are driving at. Of course, I shall issue very strict instructions that the military are never on any account to go with special constables, unless the latter are under full control of the police."

To which Henry Wilson replied the next day :—

"Yours of yesterday. I do not know what is taking place about this Ulster Police Force, and I have not had a chance of finding out from the P.M.; but I can well imagine that something else that is stupid is being done by the Irish Office, and you will be very wise not to get mixed up with the Ulster men, unless, as you say, they are under the command of the police."

The creation of a Special Constabulary was, however, proceeded with, and while in some parts of the North their work was helpful in the maintenance of order, in other parts their conduct justified my fears, so much so that it was not till the following year, when Sir J. Craig took the advice of Sir Henry Wilson, that the force could claim as a whole to set an example as supporters of law and order.

While the organization of this force was under discussion Belfast was in the throes of serious unrest, consequent on the employment of Catholics in the shipyards while Protestant workmen were out of work, and also on account of the nightly skirmishes between the adherents of both religions, stirred up in the first instance probably by Sinn Fein, but from then onwards going forward like a game of battledore and shuttlecock until the origin of any particular riot became lost in a welter of past outrage. In the circumstances the Lord Mayor proposed the formation of a special force to assist the R.I.C. in the preservation of order in the city.

Theoretically, and in any portion of the British Isles other than Ireland, the idea of a civic guard would have been excellent.



The experiment had already been attempted at Londonderry, where the Mayor organized a force, irrespective of creed or political bias, to preserve order. For about three weeks, during which the town was quiet, all went well, but the moment rioting broke out the force disappeared, no doubt dissolving itself into the opposing factions, who were only reduced to order by a strong force of military.

A proviso, proposed by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, that all who joined the proposed force should take an oath of allegiance would have automatically confined it to the Protestant portion of the population, and have exposed the force at once to the insistent attentions of gunmen, either local or imported. Not for a moment did I think that there were not loyal Catholics in Belfast, but even so they would not have joined such a force in numbers sufficient to make it undenominational. At that time, as labour trouble was rampant in the city, it would have been impolitic to enrol workmen to preserve order among their own comrades, and I therefore felt obliged to throw cold water on the scheme, which, in my opinion would not in any way reduce the responsibility of the R.I.C. or troops, and might, if rioting occurred, complicate the situation.

It was during August, 1920, that I began to be uneasy in regard to the behaviour of the new R.I.C. recruits, and urged the Castle authorities to hasten the provision of a uniform which could not be mistaken for that of the Army. The soldiers were subjected to quite enough abuse without bearing the supposed sins of the police, and so long as the latter were clothed in khaki it was not easy for the uninitiated to distinguish between the two forces, even if there was a desire to do so. My principal aim and object, and that of all officers in Ireland, was to maintain untarnished the credit of our profession in the face of a situation almost unparalleled in the records of the service. Any sign of indiscipline in a force with whom our young soldiers were

working could not fail to react upon them, and to render more difficult the task of restraining their natural impulses in the face of the uncivilized tactics of the rebels.

The difficulty of combining a civil and military control over the situation was exemplified about this time by an incident which nearly deprived the Army of the services of one of the best Intelligence officers in the command. Two notorious rebels had been arrested through the efforts of this officer, and were locked up in Cork Gaol under civil custody. They in common with the other prisoners had gone on hunger strike, and, although the importance of their arrest had been emphasized, they were one day released by the Dublin Castle authorities without any consultation with or warning to the military. The Intelligence officer was so disgusted at this action that it was with difficulty he could be persuaded not to throw up his post. Cases such as this were the more vexatious because they increased the danger of those who effected the arrests.

In spite of occasional scrapping over incidents of this kind the relations between the Castle authorities and General Headquarters were invariably cordial, although, as was only natural, the situation in Ireland was viewed from different standpoints at the two places, especially so at a later date when certain Castle officials were fully cognizant of the *pourparlers* which from time to time were carried on with the leaders of Sinn Fein of which I was ignorant or only partially informed. When in the spring of 1920 it was decided to strengthen the Castle administration the Government was fortunate to have a man of the type of Sir John Anderson available to shoulder a burden which, under the most favourable conditions, would have been difficult, but when combined with a thorough reorganization of an out-of-date machine was onerous in the extreme. Although nominally joint Under-Secretary with Mr. J. MacMahon the whole burden rested on Anderson, and it was to him that I turned in all matters affecting the civil

administration, the visits of the Chief Secretary to his lodge in the Phoenix Park being so few and far between as to make him somewhat of a mythical personage, about whom one read in Hansard but who was rarely seen in the flesh in the land of his appointment.

In the beginning of September the burden on the civil administration at the Castle was to some extent eased by the appointment of an Under-Secretary for Ulster at Belfast. This was an excellent move in itself as lightening the work in Dublin, but the way it came about was illuminating.

It appeared that Sir J. Craig, having to address the Ulster Council and fearing that the Orange rank and file were getting out of hand and might break all control, was anxious to give them a reassuring message from the Government to the effect that an Under-Secretary would be appointed for Ulster in view of the fact that the Government proposed special treatment for the six counties. The reason for this was that a dead set had been made against James MacMahon, whom the Ulstermen accused of going to the North to stir up trouble, and asserted that he was directing the administration in the Castle. The poor man had been on leave for a month, and had, even when in his office, little or nothing to do beyond presiding at the Congested Districts Board. The whole trouble was that he was a Catholic. From my point of view the move was an excellent one, as my Divisional General at Belfast, who was quite new to Ulster and could not be accused of any bias, was able thenceforth to settle all minor matters with the new Under-Secretary on the spot and thus save reference to Dublin.

While Sir John Anderson ruled in the Castle there was at his elbow in the shape of an assistant a man whose name, a year later, became almost as well known in the British Isles as that of de Valera or Michael Collins. I refer to Mr.—now Sir—Alfred Cope. Few men have been saddled with more unmerited abuse than “Andy Cope.” A tireless worker, highly strung, a

firm believer in self-government for Ireland and feverishly anxious to do all in his power, even at the risk of his life, to ensure the success of Mr. Lloyd George's policy, his somewhat irritable shortness of manner and an insufficiency of official oil when the waters became troubled made him decidedly unpopular with many of those with whom he came in contact. I have seen my Staff officers fairly dancing with suppressed rage when talking to "Andy" on the telephone.

When Mr. Lloyd George made up his mind to open direct communication with Sinn Féin, Cope was his agent, and probably no other man could have carried the matter through. He was a *persona grata* with the leaders of the rebellion, in whom he had a belief that was as pathetic as, in my opinion, it was misplaced; he honestly believed that the policy for which he was struggling was the right one for Ireland (and who can yet say he was wrong?), and he allowed nothing, neither risk of life nor wholesale abuse, to stand in his way.

Though I could not share his ideals, and was often annoyed by his attitude on official matters, I have always admired the way he hung on to the most disagreeable and dangerous task he had undertaken. After all, he was not the creator but merely the agent of a policy which time alone can vindicate or prove to have been wrong. As a public servant he did much to restore order out of chaos in the musty offices of the Castle and to get things done quickly, and, if difficult at times, was helpful in many ways to the military. An accusation lately brought against him in the course of a debate in the House of Lords that he had given away official information to the rebels is beneath contempt, and would be repudiated by any responsible official, civil or military, whose duties brought them in contact with him, however much they might be at variance with his views or methods.\*

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\* See Lord Muskerry, Parliamentary Debates,—House of Lords, 5th March, 1924, vol. 56, No. 13.

In looking back on the days I spent in Ireland it is always a pleasure to recall my association with the civil authorities at the Castle, who, if they could not always fall in with the military mind, never allowed any difference of opinion to disturb the essential co-operation between the two services.

At this time, the end of August, 1920, the hunger strike was in full blast among prisoners in most of the prisons throughout Southern Ireland, and frantic efforts were made by persons of all classes to secure their release on the plea that such a concession on the part of the Government would create a good impression and tend to lessen the activities of the gunmen, arguments which were certainly not supported by the result of similar concessions in the preceding spring, when the release of the Mountjoy hunger strikers was followed by an outburst of outrage and assassination. Fortunately that lesson had not been forgotten, and appeals for release left the Government unmoved.

In September, 1920, considerable irritation was felt among the troops in Ireland by the publication in *The Times* of extracts from *The Irish Bulletin*, the mouthpiece of the Irish extremists, in which British officers were accused of organizing a campaign of murder. In an article *The Times* supported these insinuations, though in a lukewarm manner, and when on 16th September I denied that there were any grounds for such assertions *The Times* replied by pointing out that in their article on the subject it had been stated that "they were not convinced, etc." Taking all the circumstances into consideration, the soldiers can hardly be blamed if they thought that before assisting Sinn Fein to spread its insidious propaganda those responsible for the leading London "daily" might have caused inquiries to be made at G.H.Q., if only to ensure that their leader-writer had both sides of the question before him. Unfortunately the correspondents of English papers who worked in Dublin were not exempt from the prevailing terror of the gunmen, except in one notable instance,

and as a result rarely visited G.H.Q., or supplied their papers with news which might have drawn upon them the displeasure of Sinn Fein. That the extracts from *The Irish Bulletin* found wide publicity in *The Daily Herald* on the same day as they appeared in *The Times* was, of course, no surprise, and it was some consolation to notice that at the same moment the revelations concerning the transfer of some £75,000 from Bolshevik sources into the pockets of persons intimately connected with *The Daily Herald* became public.

On four occasions only did the troops indulge in unauthorized retaliation : at Fermoy, after the kidnapping of their Brigade Commander ; at Queenstown, as a result of a rebel attack on unarmed soldiers ; at Mallow, after the barracks, during the absence of the greater part of the garrison, had been seized by rebels with the connivance of civilians employed on engineering work inside, when a sergeant was murdered ; and at Ennistymon. On this occasion there was no disorder, certain houses being systematically burnt by orders of a senior officer as a reprisal for the murder and mutilation of policemen in the streets of the village. So far as is known, one life only was lost as a result of these outbreaks, the damage being confined to the destruction of a certain amount of property. That these impulsive lapses from discipline could be construed by any writer in search of the truth into an organized campaign of murder demonstrated only too clearly the power of the Sinn Fein propaganda, and the utter ignorance among persons otherwise ill informed of the real state of affairs in Ireland.

I have already touched on the anxiety ever present in my mind that the situation in which the troops found themselves might prove too great a strain on their discipline. That such incidents were few and far between in the earlier days, and latterly unknown although under even greater provocation, is the most striking proof that there was little to find fault with in the conduct of the

officers and men. The armchair critics who talked airily about indiscipline whenever they read accounts (often exaggerated) of any of the incidents to which I have referred, were possibly ignorant that the whole training of our Army is directed to the fostering of a spirit of devotion as between the men and their officers and non-commissioned officers, so that in the day of battle the men will follow them to the death.

Those who have had experience of war know the grim determination of men to avenge on an enemy the death of a popular and beloved leader, a feeling which is equally strong in times of peace should an officer or comrade meet his death at the hand of a murderer.

Thus it happened that the very essence of the training the troops had received was straining against a discipline which imposed an imperative if artificial check on natural instincts. As one who for many years had been intimately connected with the administration of discipline in the Army, I can say that I was often astonished at the restraint exercised by all ranks, a restraint which I believe no other troops in the world could or would have practised.

The police were tried even more highly than the Army, on account of the greater set made against them by the rebels, a hundred of them at this time having been done to death without a single murderer being brought to account, and because of the condition in which the force found itself in being obliged to carry on its work while undergoing reorganization, and being filled up with men who were ignorant of the country and strange to the officers under whom they served. The discipline code of the force, too, was not adapted to the service on which the men found themselves employed. The result was that retaliation on the part of the police became a serious complication as time went on, and was one of the main reasons for which later I pressed for martial law throughout the country.

During September, 1920, I took the first step towards what may be called "organized retaliation." It became known that a movement was on foot to destroy houses occupied by officials and loyal persons in the event of Terence McSwiney dying from hunger strike. The following notice was therefore sent to Sinn Fein organizations through the post in every town and village :—

In some districts loyalists and members of His Majesty's forces have received notices threatening the destruction of their houses in certain eventualities.

Under these circumstances it has been decided that for every loyalist's house destroyed the house of a Republican leader will be similarly dealt with.

It is naturally to be hoped that the necessity for such reprisal will not arise, and therefore this warning of the punishment which will follow any destruction of loyalists' houses is being widely circulated.

Steps were taken to make lists of such houses as were known to belong to Republican leaders, the destruction only to be carried out as a military operation under the order of a Brigade Commander, two hours' notice being allowed to inhabitants to remove their belongings. The warning had the desired effect, though the orders to troops were withdrawn before McSwiney died.

Cases had recently occurred where the police on their own initiative had resorted to reprisals, especially the burning of factories, a stupid thing to do seeing that the more men and women who were out of work the greater would be the number of all-time recruits for the I.R.A.

The burning of a stocking factory at Balbriggan made much stir at the time, being a veritable godsend to the Sinn Fein propaganda bureau. It was the result of a brutal murder of police in the village, men motoring out from the police barracks in Dublin to carry out the reprisal. From the accounts in the press one might have thought that the whole village of Balbriggan was a heap of ashes, one imaginative paper describing it as like a village in the fighting zone in France. The bard to whom I have



already referred indulged his poetic licence to the point of singing :

The town of Balbriggan they burnt to the ground,  
While the bullets like hailstones were whizzing around.

I motored to the place a few days after the occurrence and had to look for the factory, a small place down a side lane. One cottage in the village was destroyed, but a person ignorant of what had happened might have motored through the village without being aware that anything unusual had occurred. Whilst the actual perpetrators of the outrage were police, certain inhabitants of the village were by no means free from participation in the burnings, and on the following Sunday the parish priest told his congregation that they had only got what they deserved.

Although these unauthorized reprisals at that time had a marked effect in curbing the activities of the I.R.A. in the immediate localities, and on those grounds were justified, or at all events winked at, by those in control of the police, I saw that they could only result in the police taking the law into their own hands to an increasingly greater degree which might necessitate the intervention of the troops, and lost no time in protesting strongly to the Chief Secretary on the subject, urging him either to carry out reprisals as authorized and controlled operations, or to stop them at all costs. Unfortunately at that time certain persons in high places in London were convinced that terrorism of any description was the best method with which to oppose the gunmen, not realizing that apart from all other reasons the gunmen could always "go one better."

## CHAPTER XVII.

FROM the end of August, 1920, and onwards through September the effects of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act began to make themselves felt. Convictions increased, running into fifty to sixty a week, and as a result more rebels went "on the run." The troops were rapidly picking up the tricks and cunning necessary to deal with I.R.A. tactics, thus inflicting considerable loss of morale, several quite considerable bodies under arms surrendering without firing a shot. As was usual, when matters began to look discouraging for their side the leaders of the I.R.A. lost no time in organizing fresh outrages in order to regain their prestige and to strengthen their grip on their adherents.

On 22nd September a party of five R.I.C. were ambushed and murdered as they lay wounded on the road, the rebels clearing off when a party of troops arrived, and two days later a well-planned attempt was made to murder General Sir P. Strickland, commanding the 6th Division at Cork, as he was going on leave. Nobody's life in Ireland was what might be called pleasantly free from danger, but of all officials General Strickland probably ran the greatest risk. Cork was notoriously the hotbed of rebellion and the abode of the worst and most degraded type of gunmen, while Strickland's activities in the carrying-out of his duty marked him down as an obvious target for their weapons. The approach to the Victoria Barracks and to the General's house, through narrow, twisty streets, increased the danger to anyone approaching or leaving the place.

On 24th September, Strickland having obtained a month's leave, motored from the barracks to the quays with his aide-de-

camp, when suddenly he was attacked by a number of men armed with automatic pistols. He returned the fire and happily escaped injury, though the car was hit in many places. It transpired later that a man who had been posted at the corner of the street leading from the barracks to signal to his accomplices did not notice that the General's car was coming until it had passed him, and was therefore late in giving the signal. Had the would-be assassins been less flurried there is not a doubt that another valuable life would have fallen to the rebels' weapons. Among some papers which were captured at a later date was a letter from the Chief of the Staff of the I.R.A. expressing sympathy with the would-be murderers at the failure of their attempt.

Directly Strickland reached the boat he wisely gave orders to the officer who was to command in his absence to immediately arrest a dozen of the most prominent Sinn Feiners in Cork City. This kept the troops busy, and removed any desire on their part to resent the outrage on their General, because they realized that some definite action was being taken. Had Strickland been killed, no power on earth would have restrained the troops from taking their toll of vengeance on the town.

The attack on General Strickland and the narrow margin by which a possible outbreak was avoided, together with the increasing acts of unauthorized retaliation on the part of the police, finally convinced me that the time had come for more drastic measures and the abandonment of the pretence of smothering rebellion under the cloak of the civil power. On 27th September, 1920, I put my views before the Chief Secretary in the following terms :—

“ With reference to the discussion on the 24th instant at your lodge in regard to retaliation, facts have since come to my notice which make it, in my opinion, imperative that steps must at once be taken to strengthen the position of the armed forces of the Crown, and to obviate any inclination on their part to indulge in reprisals, because they feel that the campaign of outrage and murder to which they have been subjected,

and have borne with patience for so long, is not being met by effective immediate measures on the part of the Government.

“ The Army may, generally speaking, be said to be free from any great taint of retaliation, and I will take measures to see that every restraint possible is applied. But if the attack on Sir E. P. Strickland had resulted in his death I believe that the troops in Cork could not have been held, and that they would have wrecked the town and probably killed many people. This would not have been an ordinary act of indiscipline, but the result of an impulse to avenge the murder of their General, under circumstances when they are aware that it is unlikely the assassins would be brought to justice by normal methods. The strain on the young soldiers of to-day may become intense, especially with the example of the R.I.C. before their eyes daily.

“ As to the R.I.C., the strain on them has been far greater than on the Army. They have seen nearly a hundred of their officers and comrades murdered, and not in one single case has the murderer paid the extreme penalty of the law.

“ Not only are they subjected to the hourly risk of assassination, but we have now clear proof that those who attack them make use of expanding bullets, ammunition which is barred by all civilized nations.

“ Whatever may be said in excuse for retaliatory measures by the forces of the Crown, the fact remains that action should be taken by the authorities, so as to render the temptation to resort to such measures unnecessary, and if that action is taken by higher authority any sign of retaliation should be promptly and drastically dealt with.

“ In considering the matter, two courses seem to me to be possible :—

- “ (1) The declaration of martial law throughout the country, and its application in areas as and where thought necessary by the authority administering it.

“ The effect of this would be unity of command, in that the police and military would be under one authority, the police being in that case subordinate to the military, whereas to-day the military merely act in aid of civil power, and are continually being placed in difficult and embarrassing positions. Or,

- “ (2) For the Government to acknowledge publicly that a state of insurrection exists in Ireland, that organized rebel forces are in active opposition to the Government, and that peace cannot be restored without military measures such as would be taken under martial law.

" The effect of this would be that the public would be warned that it was the intention of the Government to take into custody, in those areas where outrages were committed or where there was good reason to apprehend outrage, such persons as were reasonably suspected of belonging to rebel organizations, and intern them under conditions similar to those of prisoners of war in concentration camps, until such time as the condition of the country admitted of their release.

" Unless steps in the direction indicated are taken, I am convinced that a state of affairs will arise, and very shortly arise, which will reverse public opinion in Great Britain. I visualize that if, for example, a successful attempt was made on the life of the Police Adviser, who is now known throughout the R.I.C., retaliations involving many hundreds of lives would occur throughout the country. If the above proposals, or something similar, are brought into force, retaliations by the forces of the Crown would be drastically suppressed because the *raison d'être* for retaliation would be removed.

" I feel that in my capacity as Commander-in-Chief I must urge that one of the above courses be taken, and taken without delay. Otherwise it will happen that during inquiries into the presence of troops where rioting or retaliations have taken place, reflections may be made on the action of the police, and this would lead to friction between the two forces, which would be disastrous.

" Further, it must be remembered that while retaliation cannot be defended, the effect on the rebels has been most marked, and if strong steps are taken to suppress retaliation an equally powerful substitute must at the same moment be provided, both to encourage the forces of the Crown and to discourage the rebels, who would otherwise claim a victory and be proportionately encouraged to pursue their policy of outrage and murder."

These proposals, however, had little or no effect, the Chief Secretary being optimistic that reprisals would not affect public opinion in England or the stability of the Government, two objects which to me personally were of minor importance in comparison with the good name of the Army. He, however, consented to bring the second of my alternatives before the Cabinet, and in case it should meet with approval preliminary steps were taken towards the preparation of a large internment camp at

Ballykinlar, in County Down, where considerable war hutments were available.

In the meantime orders were issued to the troops that no reprisals of any kind were to be authorized, but that in the event of outrage a number of known members of the I.R.A., not exceeding twelve for each case, should be arrested and held in custody. Authority was also given for the carrying of prominent Sinn Feiners on military lorries which, while it afforded some slight deterrent to outrages, amused the light-hearted soldiery, though possibly not their involuntary passengers.

The persistency with which Sinn Fein kept rebellion alive was noticeable from the fact that in many parts of the country, where neither police nor soldiers were stationed, the most perfect peace reigned until suddenly strange men appeared who committed outrages which, of course, necessitated the despatch of Crown forces. From a careful study of reports from such localities it became evident that those responsible for the rebel activities kept a sharp eye over the whole country to ensure that no spot should be exempt from outrage for any lengthy period, in order to impress the world with a picture of the whole nation rising to cast off the oppressors' yoke.

Early in October the Government began to feel somewhat anxious as to the effect of unauthorized reprisals on public feeling in England, and the Chief Secretary was told to check the activities of the police in that direction. Various minor palliatives to ease the situation were discussed, but the politicians would not face martial law, which I urged as offering the best chance to cope with rebel activities and to enforce discipline among the police.

The failure of the Government to dominate the Sinn Fein propaganda contributed very largely to the difficulties of the situation, the descriptions of the reprisals on the part of the Crown forces which found their way into the press, generally through Sinn Fein sources, being so ludicrously exaggerated as to be

hardly recognizable by those who knew the true facts. Equally coloured in a reverse manner were the excuses put forward by the militant Chief Secretary in Parliament when called upon to take up the defence of those acting under his orders. What was required was a cold statement of fact in each case bringing out the cause that led to the outburst, and describing what actually occurred without any attempt to minimize or exaggerate the action of either side. If such information could have obtained the same publicity as the highly coloured effusions emanating from Sinn Féin sources, the reprisals, justly deplored and reprobated, would have assumed in their true perspective a very different aspect. In season and out of season I urged that steps should be taken either to counter or to check the enemy press, the following being an example written to the Castle authorities in the autumn of 1920 :—

I am becoming daily more impressed with the necessity of some action being taken in regard to false statements which appear in certain papers of the Irish press.

So far as I am aware, not one single prosecution has taken place during the last six months, although from time to time I have sent forward cases to the Castle and pressed that something should be done.

Indications are not wanting that the policy adopted by that portion of the press which is hostile to the Government has the effect of goading both the police and the troops into a sense of exasperation against the papers referred to.

Day after day scandalous and lying statements appear, and no action is ever taken beyond somewhat feeble contradictions which appear some days after the original statement has been published and which have little or no effect.

Under present conditions the matter is one for the civil authorities to take the initiative in, and I would most strongly urge that some activity should be displayed in this direction, not only to vindicate the good name of the police and military, but also to avoid possible unfortunate incidents which may suddenly arise owing to the supposition that there is no legal remedy to the present press campaign of abuse and misstatement of facts.

Although anything in the shape of unauthorized reprisals on the part of the Army was effectually checked in the autumn of 1920, after the affair at Mallow, the position was full of danger and anxiety for every officer holding a position of responsibility. A Brigade Commander in the South thus expressed himself in a letter dealing with the situation : —

The troops have hitherto shown great restraint and discipline under the most exasperating and trying circumstances. There is, however, a limit to human endurance. I feel it is my duty to express my opinion that unless new methods are immediately adopted in dealing with this campaign of murder and outrage carried on by the I.R.A. it will not always be possible to prevent indiscriminate retaliation.

Similar reports were received from every part of the country, and there grew up an uneasy feeling that if an untoward incident should occur some senior officer might be sacrificed. On this latter point I had little fear for any of my officers, because if it became necessary to protect them from the altar of political sacrifice I held some strong cards, which I should not have hesitated to have put on the table. The support and encouragement of Henry Wilson at this time was beyond all words. In every point in the game we saw eye-to-eye, except perhaps as to the future government of the island, which, after all, was a purely academic subject for us soldiers, and in any case one that seemed at the moment very far away.

It is curious to contrast the virulent criticism by which every step taken to cope with rebel activities was assailed with the curious apathy so conspicuous when the Free State Government employed measures far more drastic to deal with a similar state of affairs ; it is also comforting to reflect that retribution overtook a large proportion of the gunmen at the hands of their own countrymen and former abettors in murder.

Hunger-striking received its deathblow on 24th October, 1920, in the death of Terence McSwiney in Brixton Gaol. Efforts



were made to bring the body to Dublin and thence, in what would have been worked up into a triumphal progress, to Cork, a proposal I successfully opposed, as if carried out it would have led to rioting and loss of life on a scale difficult to foresee. The people of Dublin salved their disappointment by having a funeral procession through the streets, and in Cork the actual funeral passed off without trouble, due in a great measure to the steps taken by the military to check any untoward demonstration.

It was just at this time that considerable excitement was worked up in Dublin over the execution in Mountjoy Gaol of a youth called Kevin Barry, who was held up as a patriot and a martyr. Every kind of effort was made to secure a reprieve, though there were no circumstances in the case to justify consideration.

On 26th September, 1920, an army lorry was waiting to draw bread outside a baker's shop, when suddenly some civilian youths passing by whipped out revolvers and fired point-blank at the men in the lorry, of whom three were killed or mortally wounded. The armed escort on the lorry fired at the assailants, who ran off down side streets, except one youth, Kevin Barry, who, presumably losing his nerve, crawled under the lorry and was arrested. At his trial, counsel being employed on both sides, it was clearly proved that one at least of the soldiers was killed by him, while he was accessory to the death of the other two men. A great point was made, by those who agitated for a reprieve, of the youth of Barry, but, as I pointed out to Dr. Walsh, the Archbishop of Dublin, who came to enlist my sympathy, the victims of the crime were also mere youths, one being younger than Barry, and they, too, left mothers to mourn their loss. Barry met his fate with fortitude, the victim of those who preached assassination under the guise of patriotic sacrifice.

The powers granted under R.O.I.R., insufficient though they were, contributed to the disorganization of the rebels, many of whose leaders were arrested and punished, thus paralysing the

activities of I.R.A. units in some parts of the country. In order to avoid arrest an increasing number of rebels left their homes and went "on the run." To make the most of this state of affairs Michael Collins conceived the idea of forming these vagrant officers into "flying columns" and "active service units." The rôles of the two kinds of unit were much the same, the "active service units" being specially intended for the training of officers for the I.R.A. As a rule the headquarters of these formations were in some district remote from stations occupied by police or troops, from which they would raid into an area, reinforcing themselves with local rebels who were living as peaceful citizens in their homes. As soon as the object of the raid had been achieved the columns would either return whence they came, or, if hardly pressed, hide their arms and assume the rôle of peaceful inhabitants. On the few occasions on which they attempted to carry out an attack of any magnitude they met with little success, the troops having by this time picked up the tricks of the game, and being only too eager to get to grips with the rebels whenever opportunity offered. The result was that the "flying columns" generally confined themselves to minor attempts involving little or no risk to themselves and where the odds were wholly on their side.

On 21st November, 1920, an event occurred which for sheer brutality and callousness surpassed anything that had happened in Ireland within the memory of living man. Up to that time, although here and there officers had been shot at, no dead set had been made against them as a class, and it was generally considered that the gunmen were more likely to direct their attentions to senior officers than to the juniors or regimental officers, many of whom continued to live in rooms and houses in Dublin.

Arrangements had been made against the day when the Government might declare a state of war, but no orders had advisedly been issued restricting the liberty of officers in general. At 9 a.m. on Sunday, 21st November, eight houses were simul-

taneously visited by parties of armed rebels, who murdered seven officers, three ex-officers, two R.I.C., and two civilians. Five others were wounded, but not killed. Most of the victims were either in bed, it being Sunday morning, or were dressing. Some were murdered in their beds, among whom was an officer who had lost his leg in the European War. Others were dragged from their rooms and shot on the staircase without. In several cases wives were compelled to witness their husbands being murdered before their eyes, and one lady was herself fired at. This effort on the part of Michael Collins and other directors of the murder campaign, some of whom now rule the destinies of the Irish Free State, was ostensibly a retaliation for the execution of Kevin Barry, the Sinn Fein leaders being under the impression that those whom they murdered were in some way involved in the man's trial. Of those who were murdered only two were connected with the legal branch of the Staff, and they had nothing to do with Barry's case.

In a letter produced at the trial of Father Dominic, the priest who attended Terence McSwiney in prison, and in the handwriting of the priest, it was stated that the officers who were murdered were those who ordered reprisals, an assertion as false as that they were concerned in the trial of Kevin Barry. The fact is that even Collins and his satellites sought, after the murders, to find some plausible excuse for the deed. From an evidently inspired *communiqué* to the Irish press in June, 1922, it appeared that the man who was actually in charge of the murder gang on this occasion was "Colonel-Commandant" Keogh, who afterwards came by his death at the hands of de Valera's followers. Keogh was described as one of Michael Collins's "Old Guard," and was actively engaged in the burning of the Custom House in May, 1921, on which occasion he was arrested and interned, but later released with other internees after the truce. The murderers escaped, with the exception of one man who was wounded.

Immediately the occurrence was reported all trains out of Dublin were stopped, motor cars held up and searched at the exits of the town, and the streets heavily patrolled by troops and armoured cars. The troops were kept as busy as possible to divert their minds from the tragedy, and a considerable number of persons were arrested during the next few days, among others Arthur Griffith. The arrest of Griffith, who was known to all as a power in Sinn Fein, did much to quiet the outraged feelings of the police and soldiers, but I was severely taken to task on the subject by Mr. Lloyd George, who talked volubly about Daniel O'Connell and Parnell not having been arrested except as the result of a Cabinet decision. It is always so easy in the calm of *Downing Street* to think and talk on lines such as these, and I had to make it plain that in my opinion the arrest of Griffith had a calming effect on what might have been a very serious situation, although no one who knew anything of the personalities that made up the inner circle of Sinn Fein suspected Griffith of having had any hand in the organizing of the murders.

I took this opportunity of emphasizing my opinion that if General Boyd, the very popular officer commanding the Dublin District, came by his death no power on earth would prevent the troops from taking their revenge on the city, and the same could be said in regard to the action of the R.I.C. if their Chief, General Tudor, to whom they were devoted, was killed.

I sometimes despaired of getting politicians, even such as had once dabbled in soldiering, to understand that men are not machines, and that there is a breaking-point in the discipline of every organized body of human beings, just as there is in the resistance of metals. It was, of course, difficult for anyone who had never experienced the atmosphere of Ireland at this time to realize what the conditions were. Among rebels who were afterwards arrested several were suspected of having taken part in this Irish St. Bartholomew, but for want of evidence only five were convicted, of whom two were executed.

The afternoon of the Sunday on which these crimes were committed a football match had been advertised to take place at Croke Park, a Dublin sports ground. As it was more than probable that the gunmen would attend the match it was decided to surround the ground with troops, and then to carry out a systematic search of the crowd by the police at the exits. In order to avoid panic it was arranged that as soon as the troops were in position the crowd would be warned by megaphone of what was going to happen. Unfortunately the police arrived before the arranged time, were fired at by people in the crowd, returned the fire, and as a result a stampede took place in which ten persons were killed and some sixty injured. Though the attempt to search the crowd failed, a considerable number of revolvers were picked up on the ground. The press on both sides of the Channel and certain Members of Parliament united in stigmatizing this unfortunate business as a deliberate retaliation for the murders of that morning. There was no shadow of justification for such an accusation. The demonstration was carefully organized by responsible officers, and that it miscarried was due to failure on the part of the police to adhere to the exact time-table.

The happenings on 21st November, 1920, produced an immediate effect on the policy hitherto in force, and within a few hours authority was received to round up and intern all known officers of the I.R.A. Arrangements had long been in preparation for such an eventuality, and the lists of names in possession of the military Intelligence had fortunately been lately revised and brought up to date by means of documents which had been secured during a raid in Dublin. Within forty-eight hours over five hundred rebels were arrested throughout the country without much difficulty, such action on the part of the Government not having been anticipated in Sinn Fein circles.

When the rebels had recovered from the first shock of this new move arrests became less numerous, as many men left their homes

and took to a wandering existence, or joined a flying column, but the policy continued up to the time of the truce, when over 4,000 of the I.R.A. were interned in camps at Ballykinlar, the Curragh, and Bere Island. The organization of these internment camps was similar to that in force during the Great War for prisoners of war, and in spite of the shrieks in the pro-Republican press the internees could if they wished enjoy a measure of comfort considerably greater than many were accustomed to in their own dwellings. Any discomfort that they experienced was due to their own action in attempting to destroy the fittings and equipment, and in refusing to perform the most elementary functions for the cleanliness of their surroundings. After the Free State Government came into office, and experienced the same difficulty with the Republicans who were interned in these same camps, it was illuminating to read the outspoken comments of Ministers in the Dail who made no secret of having complained of their treatment under the British régime solely in order to create material for propaganda.

The rapidity and ease with which the arrests were effected was a sure proof of what could be accomplished once the police and troops had a definite object before them. Although, as I have said, the objective became gradually more illusive the ascendancy gained by the Crown forces early in November, 1920, was never lost, and from that time little by little, in spite of the handicap of a policy combining coercion with the offer of negotiation, the fanatical obstinacy of the I.R.A. was at the time of the truce worn down to within a measurable distance of breaking-point, a fact acknowledged in the debates of the Dail when the Free State Ministers were taken to task by their Republican opponents for not exacting better terms. There was even a hope at this time, November, 1920, that moderate opinion might make itself felt in Southern Ireland, and rumours were rife that a certain Father O'Flanagan was acting as an intermediary between the

Government and de Valera. Nothing, however, came of this peace talk, which so far as it affected military operations tended to encourage the idea that the efforts of the police and soldiers had not the whole-hearted support of the authorities in London, an idea which was strengthened by the utterances of certain members of Parliament who, being in personal touch with Michael Collins, Erskine Childers, and other leaders of Sinn Fein, raised their voices energetically on behalf of the rebels.

In the meantime we had not long to wait for a rebel counter-blast to the increased activity of the Crown forces, which, although dislocating the organization of the I.R.A. in many parts of the country, threw more men into the ranks of the flying columns for fear of being arrested in their own localities. A particularly brutal outrage was planned and carried out against a party of sixteen Auxiliary Police on 28th November, 1920. The party were proceeding in lorries along the Macroom—Dunmanway road when they were met by a rebel, in the uniform of a British soldier and wearing a regulation steel helmet, who told them that a lorry-load of soldiers a little way ahead had broken down, and that assistance was wanted. The Auxiliaries, all unsuspecting, went at once to give assistance, were led straight into an ambush of I.R.A., many of whom were dressed in British uniform, and practically the whole party were killed or wounded by the first volley. The wounded were deliberately murdered on the road, being mutilated with axes, one man only escaping. The leader of the rebels was one Sean Hayes, who was himself murdered by de Valera's Republicans on the Dublin quays in December, 1922.

In fair fight soldiers or armed police would have taken their chances with an enemy and borne no ill-will, no matter what loss they might have suffered, a characteristic for which the British have long been famed; but incidents such as the Macroom affair, where every law of civilized warfare was thrown to the winds, was calculated to rouse feelings of blind hatred in the breasts of

the forces of the Crown against every sympathizer with the rebel cause throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is true that the leaders of Sinn Fein made no secret of the fact that if they had fought according to the accepted rules of warfare they would soon have been wiped out, and that they calculated on loosening the discipline of the police and troops by the methods they employed in order to give further scope to their campaign of propaganda, arguments which can in no way minimize the stigma which will for ever be attached to Sinn Fein and to the Irish Republican Army.

Immediately after the incident of Macroom, which not only shocked the public but brought home to the Government the danger of retaliation if stronger measures were not taken against the rebels, the military authorities in Ireland were asked whether they were prepared to enforce martial law, whether it should be proclaimed throughout Ireland or only over the more lawless parts, and what additional troops would be required. At the time I was in Paris attending my son's wedding, but General Sir H. Jeudwine, who was acting in my absence, replied in the terms I had already put forward some time previously, that he was prepared to enforce martial law, that it should be proclaimed throughout the whole of Ireland, to be modified according to necessity by the Military Governor, and that seven more battalions would be required to reinforce the existing troops. The essence of the military proposal was that martial law should be proclaimed over the whole country in order to bring the police and soldiers under one control, and to abolish once and for all the divided responsibility between the civil and military authorities, which had hitherto proved cumbrous and only workable by the goodwill of the personnel of the two departments.

In the event of the Government agreeing with the proposal, I had no intention of enforcing martial law measures on every county, but the power would have existed and could have been put



into force at any moment. In areas where outrage was rampant the full force of martial law would have been applied, so far as was permissible in a country within telephonic range of Whitehall ; in other areas the orders and regulations would have been adjusted to the conditions there existing, while in those parts of the country which were free from crime the ordinary routine of civil life would not have been interfered with. Under this proposal the Chief Secretary would have dropped out of the picture so far as Ireland was concerned, but the civil administration at the Castle would have remained in a modified degree for the purpose of administering, under the orders of the Military Governor, those portions of the country where martial law was not enforced.

A great point was made by the military authorities that internment camps should be provided outside Ireland, not only because their location in a disaffected country was undesirable, but because of the number of troops required to guard and the large Staff necessary to administer them. The equivalent of six or seven battalions was eventually detailed for their protection, which meant a corresponding diminution in the numbers available to deal with the rebels who were still at large. At one time it was seriously suggested that the internees should be sent to St. Helena, but unfortunately the proposal never materialized and the continued presence of the camps in Ireland seriously hampered the activities of the troops.

After the usual amount of talk the Government finally decided on 9th December, 1920, that martial law should be proclaimed over the counties of Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, and Limerick. I tried hard to secure the inclusion of Waterford, which was geographically necessary for administrative reasons, but only obtained an agreement that the area could be extended with the sanction of the Chief Secretary.

The old saying that "half a loaf is better than no bread" was not applicable in this case. I have, I think, made it plain that for

several months I was averse to martial law because I did not think it could be made, or continue to be, effective owing to the difficulty of finding sufficient troops, and to the pressure of a large portion of the British public upon the Government. My conversion to it was solely due to the necessity of bringing the administration, especially the control and direction of the police and military, under one authority. The final decision of the Cabinet left matters in this respect very much as they were, and produced absurd legal anomalies which could not be understood by the man in the street. For example, a man might commit an offence in a county under martial law which was punishable with death, while a relation of his, and in Ireland most people are related, committing the same offence a few miles off, but in a locality not under martial law, would be liable to a fine or short term of imprisonment, or possibly to no punishment at all.

The discussions with the politicians on this subject of martial law, if the matter had not been so serious, would have been intensely amusing, not only from their ignorance of the whole question, but from the evident fear that the soldier once armed with martial law powers would commit the most terrible atrocities. Another school of political thought seemed to imagine that the mere declaration of martial law would bring about a millennium, quite oblivious of the fact that even if the whole country had been brought under one control the rooting-out of rebellion and murder must be a long and gradual process.

However, there was nothing to be done but to make the best of what had been decided on and endeavour to turn this unsatisfactory policy to the best account. No time was wasted; the necessary proclamations, having been prepared some time before, were issued on 10th and 12th December, 1920, respectively.

The proclamations and martial law regulations were based on those issued during the South African War of 1899-1902, and for the use of the British Army of the Rhine after the European War.

On account of the partial application of martial law several essential regulations had to be considerably modified or struck out altogether, such as the institution of identity cards, an efficient control over the press, and the suspension of civil courts. The continued existence of the civil courts in Dublin not only caused undesirable delay in the execution of sentences of the military courts in the martial law area, but led hereafter to a ludicrous situation which will be described in its proper place.

Complete and effective martial law is usually defined as "the suspension of ordinary law and the government of a country or parts of it by military tribunals," a state of affairs which never existed in Ireland by reason of Dublin being outside the martial law area, and the courts in that city being available for appeals to declare illegal the decisions of military courts in the martial law area.

It is curious to notice that while the rebels had for a long time refused to acknowledge British courts of justice, and had replaced them with amateur courts of their own, they did not hesitate to take full advantage of the British courts of appeal whenever a death sentence by a military court was at issue. This had been foreseen by the soldiers, and it had been pointed out to the Chief Secretary, when the question of imposing martial law was first discussed on 1st December, 1920, that from the legal standpoint the proclamation of martial law to a portion only of the country not only would not help matters but would probably accentuate the present difficulties. And so it proved.

A number of cases were carried to the King's Bench, who refused writs of habeas corpus, and in one instance a case was carried to the House of Lords but was never completed, owing to the intervention of the truce.

Seeing that as a general rule the civil courts upheld the decisions of the military courts it may be asked how the civil courts hampered the military authorities. It was the delay and uncer-

tainty involved which nullified the effect of martial law, encouraging the rebels to take advantage of every quibble which the fertile brains of sharp Irish lawyers could discover, and proportionately depressing the forces of the Crown, who could not be expected to understand the constitutional questions involved in these applications to the King's Bench, which appeared to them as merely another loophole of escape for men whom they rightly looked upon as the murderers of their comrades.

The postponements of sentences were often so lengthy, owing to appeals, that at times it became inhuman to carry out an original sentence, a contingency which was fully realized by those who acted for the prisoners, and who lost no opportunity of dragging on the proceedings to the utmost limit. This practice of appealing became so frequent that I was obliged to write a strong protest to the Chief Secretary in April, 1921, to which, however, he vouchsafed no reply. The following letter taken from a prisoner in Cork Gaol is an example that the rebels were fully alive to the advantage they possessed in being able to appeal to the King's Bench against conviction by military courts :—

“ Detention Barracks,  
Cork, 5/2/21.

A Chara,\*

There is a chap here named John Allen, from Tipp., who is to be tried on Monday morning at ten o/c on the charge of having a revolver and dum-dum bullets. He is a co. captain, and also a F.(lying) C.(olumn) man, and has been wanted for a long time. This, coupled with his charge, makes the chance of his escaping the full penalty very small. We, here, therefore think that he should be represented at his trial by counsel. He has already instructed Boudren, the solicitor, who advised him to apologize for having the weapon. This the chap is not prepared to do, and we agree with him on the matter, but we think that in view of Sir John Simon's recent speech that expert legal advice may save the man from death. If you should agree with this you should get in touch with Boudren immediately, and instruct him to demand an adjournment of the

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\* An Irish form of address.

trial until such time as learned counsel is secured to conduct Allen's defence. As there is not much time to lose instant action is necessary.

M. Nc.

P.S.—Am sending this on the advice of C. Mc. and others, who say that by making this a test case many other lives may be saved."

Here was a case in which the evidence that the man was found in possession of arms and dum-dum ammunition, a type of ammunition barred by all civilized nations, was undisputed, but the counsel employed in the man's defence carried the case to the King's Bench at Dublin. After considerable delay the Dublin courts refused writs of prohibition and habeas corpus, but it was a good example of the half-and-half measures so dear to the Government in their dealings with rebellion. During the seven months between the introduction of martial law in the Southern Counties and the date of the truce only fourteen death sentences were carried out, all by sentence of military courts in distinction from courts-martial, which were only used in cases where the extreme penalty was not involved.

In the spring of 1921, in order to deal more effectively with men taken red-handed under arms, especially those equipped with dum-dum or mutilated ammunition, instructions were issued to try such cases by "drum-head" courts. These courts were only resorted to when a man was taken *in flagrante delicto*, and of whose guilt there could be no question. On three occasions only were they used before the truce, but had that event not materialized and martial law been extended throughout the country, as then seemed probable, it was my intention to use these courts alone for all cases of men taken in arms.

Few as were the capital punishments in comparison with outrages, it became increasingly evident that they were affecting the morale of the rebels, as was evidenced by the fact that towards the spring of 1921 few men were captured with weapons except when actually fighting. Before whatever description of court a

man might be haled, and whether the offence was serious or insignificant, the British officers who composed the courts became thoroughly versed in the national craze for setting up an alibi, in the manufacture of which the Irishman excels. One example will suffice :—

“ A Chara,

I am writing to say that the case of John Murphy is very serious, as four soldiers are swearing against him, so it is absolutely necessary to have plenty witnesses to prove an alibi, and so save him from the rope. To do this I would suggest that you see Barry Sullivan, tell him of any person who you think would swear that he, Murphy, was working at Eirie Tarrants on the morning of the raid, and also to look up the people of Barrack Street, that would say he wasn't among the men who made the raid. I am enclosing a list of some of the people of Barrack Street, but there is many more who we can't think of. This work we confidently leave to you, and any progress you make you can report to B. Sullivan. The names are as follows. (Here followed thirty-one names.)

This is all we can think of, so we will leave the rest in your hands now, and see B. Sullivan, as he don't know who to go to in Mallow.”

In reading over the proceedings of trials it was extraordinary to notice the number of cases where men gave or brought evidence to prove that they were attending Mass at the time when an outrage in which they were suspected of being concerned was taking place.

Had it not been for the number of barristers and solicitors who having held commissions during the European War, patriotically came forward to assist in the Irish crisis the legal difficulties would have been overwhelming. At important trials and when counsel was briefed for the defence the case for the Crown was in the hands of eminent counsel specially sent over from London.

I remember on one occasion the late Sir Richard Muir\* came to conduct a case in Dublin. He stayed with me at the Royal Hospital, and we had the greatest difficulty in preventing him

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\* Sir Richard David Muir, Kt. (1847-1924). Senior Treasury Counsel.

from wandering about the town and risking his life, because the rebels, being well informed about people coming and going, would not have hesitated to have murdered anyone connected with a Crown prosecution. Sir Richard was sent to the City Hall, where the court was held, in an armoured car and brought back in the same conveyance, and was much amused at being pushed into the trapdoor and squatted on the floor among the feet of the machine-gunners and driver.

It was on this occasion that, while looking out of a window of the City Hall during an interval of the trial, Sir Richard saw three of the R.I.C. murdered at the corner of the opposite street, not twenty yards from where he was standing. He, like every other person who came over, was astonished to find how very different the Irish "atmosphere" was in reality to what people in England imagined it to be.

By 15th December, 1920, the martial law machine had begun to move slowly in the four Southern Counties, but many adjustments were necessary before any improvement in the situation could be hoped for. I was in London when the decision to enforce martial law was given, and on 10th December in a letter to my *locum tenens* in Dublin explained the difficulties ahead :—

"The Prime Minister himself told me to-day that he was most anxious that, while we put the screw on the rebels to the greatest degree, we and the police should rather go out of our way not to be disagreeable to the unoffending inhabitants. I pointed out to him that in Ireland it is very difficult to distinguish between the offending and the unoffending article. You will gather from his speech that with one hand he intends to repress outrage, but with the other he is waving an olive branch, and so it will be up to us to try and play up to what seems to be a somewhat complicated policy."

Two of the main difficulties of the partial application of martial law were the guarding of the boundaries of the martial law area so as to prevent rebels, either individually or in bands, moving



SIR NEVIL MACREADY





backwards and forwards, a measure it was impossible to carry out effectively owing to lack of troops, and the effective control over the police. Theoretically the police forces of all kinds within the martial law area were under the control of the Military Governor, but this was so in a very limited degree and only after several months of argument with the civil authorities in Dublin, who were unwilling to abandon their control over the police.

On the very day before martial law was declared in the four counties an occurrence took place in Cork which caused a considerable sensation and furnished Sinn Fein with admirable material for propaganda. On the evening of 11th December, 1920, fires suddenly broke out in the premises of Grant & Co., Cash & Co., and the Munster Arcade, in the centre of Cork city, and afterwards at the City Hall, all of which places were burnt to the ground.

An inquiry was immediately held, as a result of which there was no doubt that the fires and subsequent looting were the work of a company of the Auxiliary Division of the police who had recently arrived in Cork, and who had been exasperated by a rebel ambush at a place called Dillon's Cross. No lives were lost, though some shooting took place between the Auxiliaries and rebels in the streets. The whole affair was the result of this Auxiliary company having been sent out from the training centre before it was properly organized and disciplined, and to the want of control on the part of the Commanding Officer.

Order was restored by the troops and the police stationed in Cork, a task of no little difficulty owing to the fact that the Auxiliary company had marched out of its barracks under its own officers. While the incident was most regrettable it was hardly a matter of surprise to those who realized that the disciplinary code under which the police were serving was never intended to regulate armed forces such as the Auxiliary companies.

The efficiency and conduct of these Auxiliary companies, and,

indeed, of the whole of the R.I.C. at this period, transformed as they were from a police into a purely military force under a police organization, depended entirely upon the character and power of control of the officers in command. When those officers were equal to the task the work and behaviour of the men was admirable ; but when, as sometimes happened, the officers either lacked the power of command or encouraged their men to take the law into their own hands, these bodies of police became a danger to their friends and a disgrace to their uniform. The only excuse that can be made for the latter class is that their methods did not surpass those of the rebels from whom they took their cue.

For some reason which I have never discovered, the Castle authorities decided not to make public the opinion of the inquiry on the burnings in Cork, a mistaken policy in my opinion, since it gave greater scope to the rebel propaganda, and it was no secret in the town as to who were the culprits. The proper course, to my mind, would have been to mete out exemplary punishments to the responsible officers, and to any men who could be identified as having been actual participators in the affair ; instead of which those responsible for the administration of the forces talked of disbanding the whole division. My opinion was asked, and I recorded it as follows :—

In my opinion there can be no question at the present moment of any weakening of the police and military forces in the country. The court of inquiry on the burning of certain premises in Cork on the 11th and 12th December indicated that it was the result of unauthorized action on the part of the Auxiliary Division R.I.C. This company had been hurriedly despatched to the South owing to the situation caused by rebel action in that part of the country, and undoubtedly had not reached the standard of cohesion and discipline which would have been attained had more time been available. The fact that certain men of a company were involved does not in my opinion furnish any foundation for condemning the Auxiliary Division as a whole.

. . . . .

In support of the views I hold is the fact that several companies of the Auxiliary Division have from time to time been exposed to the utmost provocation by the cold-blooded murder of their comrades and yet have preserved a discipline above all praise, which without doubt was owing to the personality of the officers and their hold over the men.

Incidents of this kind aggravated the situation and increased the already heavy responsibility on the shoulders of officers in command of bodies of troops who at any moment might find themselves obliged to curb the irregular activities of the police, and thus risk collision between the two forces.

From the date on which martial law was declared "official punishments" came into force in the area. This raised a storm of protest by the rebel propagandists and their friends in England, who made no effort to possess themselves of the true facts. The prevalent idea was that these "reprisals" were carried out indiscriminately, in the heat of the moment, and without authority or control. This was far from being the case, as the following rules show :—

Punishments, including confiscations, fines, or if necessary the destruction of houses and property might be carried out against any person or persons who might be considered to be implicated in or cognizant of outrages against the Crown forces: such outrages to include ambushes, attacks on barracks, etc.

Punishments could only be carried out on the authority of a Brigade Commander, who could not delegate his authority, and who before taking action had to satisfy himself that the people concerned were, owing to their proximity to the outrage or their known political tendencies, implicated in the occurrence. This officer had to furnish the officer carrying out the operation with specific instructions in writing or by telegram.

The punishments were carried out as military operations, the reason being publicly advertised.

The owners of houses were always given notice in writing, the reasons for the punishment, together with time to remove valuables, etc.

Explosives were used to destroy houses. They were never burnt as a punishment.

The wildest accounts were spread broadcast about these punishments, or "official reprisals," from which the ignorant might think that whole areas had been laid bare. The number of houses destroyed by the military was infinitesimal compared to that for which the rebels were responsible, amounting in the martial law area alone to 407 buildings up to May, 1921. At the end of six months the punishments were stopped by order of the Government who were admittedly beaten by the rebel propaganda.

The system was not one which any soldier would willingly advocate, but it was one method of dealing with individuals whose complicity in outrages was well known locally, but against whom it was impossible to procure evidence, and its effect was considerable against all but the most extreme rebels, many of whom had little stake in the country. An argument against the system was that the rebels by burning country houses possessed the means of effective retaliation, but it is more than probable that the country houses would have been burnt to an equal degree had there been no official reprisals, and certainly this kind of outrage continued, and if anything increased, long after official reprisals had been put a stop to, and even after the truce.

Another check on rebel activities which was brought into force in December, 1920, were the restrictions on motors. In the happy land of Ireland the inhabitants had not been accustomed in normal times to take out motor licences, and, therefore, the police had no reliable record of cars or owners. The tracing of cars used by the rebels to commit outrages and to escape was therefore practically impossible. A system of military permits for all motor vehicles was introduced which, though by no means wholly effective, enabled the police and military to exercise a measure of control over the movements of disloyal persons. Bicycles were also restricted in localities where outrages had occurred.

It was about this time that those who directed the activities of

the I.R.A. hit upon a new form of outrage which, as it involved little risk, was enthusiastically taken up by the rank and file. This was the destruction of roads, either by felling trees, digging trenches, or building walls of loose stones across them.

In districts where road-cutting was very prevalent the creameries were closed down, a restriction which raised a considerable outcry. As a matter of fact these creameries were in many cases the distributing centres of rebel orders and instructions to the surrounding districts, through the agency of the peasants who brought in the milk from the various farms.

According to rebel sympathizers great hardship was inflicted on the peasantry by the closing of the creameries, but from reliable local information this was by no means the case, the poorer peasants, who owned one or two cows, being by no means averse to a restriction which enabled them to enjoy the full benefit of their cows instead of the skimmed milk which was returned to them from the creameries. The howl no doubt originated from those who were financially concerned in the success of those establishments, a considerable number of which were afterwards burnt by the rebels.

While in December, 1920, the imposition of martial law in the South and the guarding of the border line made further demands on the troops, the numbers available were greatly depleted by the necessity of sending drafts to India and the Colonies, that pernicious system which breaks the heart of the enthusiastic officer serving at home. In order to compensate for this diminution of strength seven battalions were despatched from England, making a total of fifty-one in the command, many of them, however, so reduced in numbers as to increase the total strength to a very inappreciable degree.

What was of greater value was the increase in the number of armoured cars, which by the spring of 1921 reached a figure of seventy Peerless cars and thirty-four Rolls-Royce. These cars

were used as escorts to convoys, for quelling disturbances and taking part in raids for arms, etc. Their moral effect was considerable, and the rebels became very chary about showing themselves when one of them was about.

The lorries used for patrol work, either in the country or in the towns, were at this time armoured to resist revolver bullets and in some cases rifle bullets. The plates for the latter purpose were not used to any great extent, being so heavy as to reduce the speed of the lorries, and as the training of the men when engaging parties of rebels in the country emphasized the importance of at once getting out of vehicles to attack the assailants, the necessity was not so great as in the case of the lorries used for patrolling the streets of a town, where occasional revolver shots were always to be expected.

The partial system of martial law had not been in force for a fortnight before I represented to the Chief Secretary the absurdity of the position in which the area of a military division was split up into two districts, one under martial law and one under the civil administration. If the Government did not see their way to impose martial law over the whole country, it was at all events necessary to enforce it within the boundaries of a reasonably defined area. In Counties Clare and Waterford the number of outrages were at least as great in proportion as in the adjacent counties which were under martial law. From Kilkenny there was conclusive evidence that the rebels were moving into that county from Tipperary and Waterford, while the inclusion of Wexford was essential for administrative reasons. Effect was given to the decision of the Chief Secretary to include these four counties in the martial law area by a proclamation dated 4th January, 1921, care being taken to lighten the restrictions applicable to Wexford, that county being at the time in a state of comparative tranquillity.

From this time up to the following June, when the Government contemplated action that would have been effective, the situation

so far as the Crown forces were concerned underwent no change of policy. Many persons, even those to whom official reports were open and who might have been expected to have appreciated the difficulties which confronted the forces of the Crown, were impatient at what they were pleased to consider the slow progress towards the suppression of rebellion. Few, and none connected with the inner circle of Government, had set foot in Ireland to examine the problem on the spot, where alone a true perspective of the situation could be obtained.

An exception must, however, be made in favour of the Labour Party, of whom a Commission of seven members, four of them members of Parliament, under the chairmanship of the Right Hon. Arthur Henderson, M.P., arrived in Ireland in December, 1920, to inquire into "the whole question of 'reprisals' and violence in Ireland." In the previous January some Labour people had come over who apparently contented themselves with such information as Sinn Fein chose to give them to assist in harassing the Government. On that occasion no inquiries were made at G.H.Q., or from any responsible military authority, so far as I am aware, and it was presumably on the strength of this and other information from rebel sources that in October, 1920, Mr. Henderson moved a vote of censure on the Government, which was heavily defeated. It is curious to note in this connection that Mr. Henderson himself had been a member of the Asquith Government, by whom 1,836 persons had been deported without trial. Mr. Henderson's Commission, to whom was attached a member of the Irish Labour Party, having toured the country under a safe conduct from Sinn Fein, who were only too glad of this opportunity to extend their propaganda, visited G.H.Q. in Dublin, where they were shown many reports and confidential papers, and given full and accurate information on any point they desired. One of the members of the Commission went so far as to tell one of my Staff that they were much struck during their



tour at receiving no complaints against the methods or behaviour of the troops.

On the return of the Commission to England, however, individual members lost no opportunity of abusing and vilifying the troops in a violent manner, while their long-winded report was little less than a *rechauffé* of what had already appeared in the Sinn Fein press. The campaign of murder by the gunmen was dismissed in a few lines, attacks on the Crown forces being, in the opinion of the Commission, "regrettable" but "less reprehensible than the murder of British officers and civilians in their beds on 'Bloody Sunday,' November 21st," which is the most severe reflection to be found in the report on the methods of the I.R.A. The childlike belief of the Commission in statements made to them by persons, including "town councillors," who were brought under their notice by Sinn Fein agency, was pathetically ludicrous to anyone acquainted with the natural genius of the Irish for the invention of fables which they think may please their audience, more especially if the relation should be to their own advantage.

One of the conclusions arrived at by the Commission was curious and almost astonishing. In the report they openly advocated the imposition of martial law as the most humane method of coercion. Until the report appeared I had been under the impression that one of the main factors which deterred the Government from imposing martial law was the fear of the Labour Party in Great Britain.

The advent of this Labour Commission in Ireland would have passed unnoticed by the troops, who were fully alive to the fact that adherence to facts has little part in political propaganda, had it not been for the inclusion in the report of a vile innuendo that His Majesty's troops were provided with disguises in order to emulate the gunmen in their campaign of secret assassination, an innuendo which could only have found a place in the report with the concurrence of an officer of the Regular Army who had a short

time before retired on pension. On page 68 of the report was the following illuminating entry :—

(3) THE PROVISION OF MASKS BY THE GOVERNMENT.

The following is a copy of a packing note, showing that goggles for "night practice"—or masks, as we prefer to call them—are supplied by the authorities for the use of the forces of the Crown in Ireland. The Commission examined one of these masks, which are expensively produced.

Then follows a copy of Army Form G. 1028, showing that sixteen sets of "Goggles night practice" had been issued to the depot of the Royal Irish Fusiliers on 12th October, 1920.

Now what were the real facts, and why were these goggles issued? In 1917, when recruits for our armies were undergoing intensive training to fit them in the least possible time to take their places at the front, difficulty was found in instructing them in night work, whether in "No-Man's-Land" on the Western front, or on the open country in the Eastern theatres. To overcome the difficulty goggles made of cloth with cellulo-gelatine films were invented, which, when worn in daylight, produced an effect on the wearer equivalent to being in the dark, thus enabling night training to be carried out during the ordinary working hours. These goggles were well known to every officer in the Army and were issued to all units, including depots, for the purpose of training recruits.

When Mr. Henderson's Labour Commission came to Ireland they brought with them as Military Adviser a certain Brigadier-General C. B. Thomson, a Regular officer of long service in the Royal Engineers, who had held many Staff appointments. The service and experience of this officer precludes the idea that he could have been ignorant of the use and object of these goggles when his attention was drawn to the Army Form by his civilian colleagues, and, therefore, one can only suppose that in order to curry favour with his Labour friends he agreed to be a party to an aspersion

upon his former comrades which he knew was without truth or foundation.

At a conference of the Labour Party held on 19th December, 1920, to receive the report of the Commission full advantage was taken of this deliberate misstatement by a delegate, who, improving on General Thomson's previous assertion that the soldiers had "assisted at scenes of arson, pillage, and murder," went on to say: "But when they came to look through this report they would see certain references with regard to entry into houses by armed men, and in the appendix there was a copy of an official packing note which referred to certain masks used for night attacks and sent by the military authorities—by Mr. Winston Churchill—from some part of England to some part of Ireland. Let them imagine themselves sleeping quietly in their houses with wife and children and hearing a loud knocking at the door, and then a number of armed men with masks rushing in." (The speaker here exhibited one of the masks.)

Doubtless, as a Cabinet Minister and a member of the House of Lords, the General has to-day forgotten this little incident which raised him a step higher in the estimation of his adopted party.

In January, 1921, a political campaign was opened throughout Great Britain by the Labour Party against the Government policy towards Ireland, based on the experiences of the Commission. As no steps were taken to contradict these aspersions on the Army in Ireland it is only fair to the officers and men to quote a few of my remarks to the Chief Secretary at the time :—

"On page 6 the Commission reflects on the state of the Army in Ireland and the conclusion arrived at is by no means justified by facts. That the present-day soldier is young is the natural result of the late war, but in the opinion of those best able to judge, the discipline, health, and keenness of the troops serving in Ireland is far beyond what might have been expected, and as

one who before the late war commanded troops employed in aid of civil power I can confidently assert that the general behaviour and demeanour of the troops in Ireland to-day, under circumstances far more trying than troops have been heretofore called upon to endure, are in every way satisfactory, and I very much doubt whether better results would have been obtained with pre-war troops.

“On one or two occasions only during the summer troops got out of hand because of severe aggravation caused by the murder of their officers, and I am satisfied that, short of the very greatest provocation, the troops in Ireland can be relied upon to carry out their unpalatable duty with credit to themselves and to the State. The junior officers are keen on their work and are doing extremely well. . . . It is curious that the Labour Commission should draw attention to what they consider is a blot upon the Army, in that so many officers have obtained commissions from the ranks, i.e., have not been through the Royal Military College. One would have thought that, of all people, Mr. Henderson and his colleagues would have welcomed a large proportion in the commissioned ranks of men who had gained their rank by their own efforts from the starting-point of privates. The percentage of subalterns serving in Ireland who passed through the Royal Military College is 53.3. I emphatically deny the statement that training has been neglected or discipline become lax. The training now given to troops is that which ordinarily would be undertaken later in their career, but I am satisfied that when troops now in Ireland are able to revert to peace conditions, and put in some six months of steady barrack-square work, the training they are now undergoing will result in their being in no way inferior to the men of the old Expeditionary Force.

“On page 29 of the report a veiled inference is made that  
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women have been interfered with. On this point I think even the rebels will admit that no case has yet occurred where either the police or military have insulted or ill-treated women."

I also drew attention to the incident of the "masks."

References have already been made to the licence allowed to the certain sections of the Irish press, for whom no libel was too gross and no lie too obvious to print. Much of this abuse found its way into English and foreign papers, where it received credence mainly owing to the disinclination or inability of the Government to counter it. The hands of the military authorities were tied in the matter, and on the only two occasions when they used such power as they possessed their efforts were discountenanced. In 1919, one particularly virulent Irish newspaper was suppressed, the printing machinery being dismantled, but shortly afterwards the Government ordered the return of the plant, and the paper reappeared on lines more scandalous than before. Being aware of this incident, when I became Commander-in-Chief I kept a close watch for a chance of proceeding according to the recognized forms of law against any paper which might overstep the bounds. In December, 1920, a conviction was obtained against *The Freeman's Journal*, the owner and editor being sentenced to a fine and imprisonment. The Government, however, fearful of being accused of interfering with the liberty of the press, nullified the proceedings and the paper continued its career unchecked.

Only in the martial law area, where the local press was under control, a control exercised with a very light hand, was there a semblance of accuracy and truth in the news served out to the public. It may be well, therefore, at the risk of repetition, to summarize as shortly as possible the difficulties that faced the forces of the Crown from January, 1921, onwards, difficulties about which the public knew little and probably cared less, for at that time people in Great Britain were tired to death of Ireland and its affairs

The assets on the side of the Crown forces were the increased (though still insufficient) numbers of the police and troops, together with the provision of motor transport on an extended scale ; martial law was in force in Munster, and the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act throughout the whole country, under which powers of arrest and internment were placed in the hands of competent military authorities ; regulations were in force restricting motor traffic, the holding of fairs and markets, and providing for the imposition of curfew when required.

To anyone not residing in Ireland the possession of such unchallenged powers, backed by some 40,000 police and troops, might seem to render neither difficult nor lengthy the task of reducing the rebels to submission. But let us look for a moment at the other side of the problem, a problem long recognized and studied by the military authorities both in Whitehall and in Dublin. The area in which disorder might, and did, from time to time occur extended over some 30,000 square miles. The imposing array on paper of fifty-one battalions and six cavalry regiments did not take into account the facts that owing to the weakness of nearly every battalion, and to the number of guards locked up in protecting barracks and public buildings, not more than from 250 to 300 men per battalion were available for offensive action against the rebels. While nothing could surpass the keenness of both officers and men, they constantly were suddenly faced with situations foreign to all preconceived ideas of military operations, but demanding as great a display of cunning, vigilance, patience, and resource as the most delicate operation of war.

Nor, as in war, was the strain relaxed when active operations were not in progress. In Ireland there was no defined objective, no front line ; from the moment a soldier left his barrack gate he was in what may be described as a mist of murder. Every person he met, whether in the streets of a town or in country lanes, was a potential rebel, a fact most difficult to drive into the unsuspecting

mentality of the British soldier. Lines of Communication as known in theatres of war were non-existent in Ireland. Roads were safe only for armoured cars ; post and telegraph offices, as well as the railways, were staffed by men and women who were rebels, or who by fear were coerced into playing the rebels' game. The very barracks in which the troops lived were not free from rebel agents among the civilian personnel employed therein. Indeed, it may be truly said that the troops and police were living within the enemy's lines where every movement was known and often betrayed before begun.

On the other hand, everything was in favour of the rebels. Armed men were indistinguishable from peaceable civilians until they opened fire, which in towns they generally took care to do when mixed up with other civilians, knowing that the Crown forces would hesitate to fire blindly upon the innocent and guilty. In the country military or police patrols would come upon a group of men playing the national game of pitch-and-toss, or engaged on agricultural work, who, if the odds were sufficiently in their favour would suddenly open fire, disperse, and if lost to sight for a moment would be found again in the guise of innocent unarmed countrymen. Attacks on small detachments of police and troops required little skill or courage in execution. The rebels, being indistinguishable from the ordinary inhabitants, found no difficulty in concentrating by twos and threes at any given spot, where they would lounge about or rest in the cottages, confident that no one would dare to give them away, and if they found that the conditions were not sufficiently in their favour (for they seldom attempted an attack unless in overwhelming numbers) they watched the troops pass by and deferred their operation until a more favourable opportunity.

The number of occasions when the precautions taken by police and soldiers frustrated intended attacks can never be known, but it is convincingly proved that, apart from murders of individuals,

the I.R.A. never attempted an attack without a numerical superiority of not less than twenty to one. In the attack on Kilmallock police barrack it reached two hundred to one. The murder of individuals in towns such as Dublin and Cork required no courage, and very little prearrangement. A few accomplices, men or women, a convenient corner of a side street leading into a labyrinth of dirty slums, were the sum total of the precautions it was necessary to take, and even such precautions were hardly necessary among a population who, cowed by fear, would not lift a finger to interfere, or even to give evidence at an inquest. It is no exaggeration to say that the risk in committing murder in open daylight in one of the larger towns in Ireland, including Belfast at this time, was no greater than to stop and light a cigarette at the corner of a street.

From time to time many suggestions were offered, mainly by persons who had no practical knowledge of the conditions existing. It was said that the difficulties were merely those inherent to guerilla warfare. This was certainly true, but it was just because the Government were unable or unwilling to recognize the state of affairs as guerilla warfare that made the task of the Crown forces so impossible. If the Government had taken up the challenge of Sinn Fein the situation would, from a military standpoint, have become simple and comparatively easy. Martial law would automatically have been enforced all over the country, and every man found in possession of arms and not wearing a uniform or distinctive badge would have been shot out of hand. A few months of this régime would have broken the power of the I.R.A., and have removed the terror by which they paralysed their countrymen.

While difficulties such as have been outlined, together with schemes to overcome them, were ever present in the minds of those responsible for the military operations, the troops at the dawn of 1921 were full of spirits and rapidly assimilating themselves to the curious conditions of their service. A special school of instruction was established at the Curragh for officers and non-



commissioned officers in the peculiar tactics necessary to defeat the methods of the rebels, which were carefully watched by the General Staff at G.H.Q. Every manoeuvre calculated to forestall or defeat the rebels' tactics was carefully worked out and taught by practical demonstration, the results of the system being soon evident by the way in which the troops proved their superiority whenever they became engaged with the I.R.A. This school of instruction was open to the police, who unfortunately did not take full advantage of it. Had they done so their efficiency, especially when dealing with bands of rebels in the open country, would have been considerably increased and lives would have been saved. In Munster, and the two Leinster counties of Kilkenny and Wexford, the effect of martial law, though not pronounced, was apparent. Few arms had been handed in, but outrages were mostly carried out in a half-hearted way, and where attacks on police barracks took place there was little inclination to push them to a conclusion; nor was evidence wanting to show that the rebel rank and file were acting under coercion rather than of their own free will from a wholesome fear of the penalties to which they were exposed.

The police, too, had become considerably strengthened in numbers, and by the provision of motor transport sufficient for their needs; all barracks held by them having also by this time been secured against attacks by bullet-proof shutters to doors and windows and the demolition of adjacent buildings which were a source of danger. Whilst the lack of unity of command, the existence of two codes of discipline in forces working side by side, and the inability of some police officers to control their men prevented the full value being obtained from the forces at the disposal of the Government, and at times led to useless loss of life, the situation was infinitely more hopeful than it had been at any time during the past nine months, and gave reason to hope that before the new year closed the rebel activities would be reduced to insignificant proportions.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WITH the new year arrived that stormy petrel of Irish politics Eamon de Valera, who disembarked from America during the first week of January, 1921. Having received instructions from the Castle that he was not to be interfered with, or arrested, I issued orders to that effect, pointing out at the same time to the Chief Secretary's people in a letter containing the following passage the difficulties that might arise :—

“ We have at present put an embargo on any interference with de Valera, and, as you know, the proposed raid last night was stopped as a matter of policy. Presumably, at dinner last night, de Valera and his associates came to some conclusion as to their future policy. From indications now received it looks as if that policy was going to be intensified outrage; but, apart from that, I do not think either your Secret Service or my men can carry on indefinitely while de Valera is under the protection umbrella. To give him reasonable time to consult his colleagues and come to a decision may be quite sound, but to extend the time may, and in my opinion will, run us into difficulty. For instance, it will very soon be known that we do not intend to arrest de Valera, and therefore ‘ bad men ’ will take the opportunity of consorting with him in the hope of immunity. Every time we hear that he has a conference, or that he is living in some place where we have good information that other ‘ bad men ’ are living as well, we must raid the place to get the other men, and it is quite likely that during the raid firearms may go off, with disastrous results to de Valera. Shortly, I am quite clear in my own mind that the immunity of de Valera should have a definite term, and personally I think he has been here quite long enough to make up his mind. It is quite impossible to carry out a repressive policy if we have one hand tied behind our back, and it means increased danger to those who are engaged in executive action.”

A few days later I saw the Chief Secretary, who agreed that if de Valera was found in company with gunmen he must take his chance if firing occurred.

The number of outrages in and about Dublin, and the information in my possession pointing to an intensified campaign of murder and outrage in the capital, decided me to represent to the Chief Secretary the advisability of warning the public that if matters became worse martial law would be proclaimed in the city and county of Dublin. Nothing came of the suggestion, the Chief Secretary at that time, judging by his interviews with the press, being in an optimistic frame of mind for which none of us living in Ireland could see any grounds.

Some six weeks later, when it had become evident that my predictions of an intensified campaign of outrage were justified, and there had been eighteen outrages in the city during the first twenty days of January, I returned to the charge on the subject, this time to Henry Wilson, who I knew would press the matter on the Government. Both he and I were fully alive to the fact that on account of the want of sufficient troops, and of the hesitation of the Government to persist in a definite policy, any form of martial law that might be imposed would be a very diluted draught, but even so it would have the effect of abolishing several anomalies, and would ensure unity of command, the abolition of the civil courts, the control of the press, and above all would give greater control over the city which was the headquarters of the rebel organization.

In putting the proposal forward I emphasized my opinion that neither martial law nor any other expedient would produce an early and complete subjugation of the rebel forces; at the best, the process could only be one of attrition, but under martial law that process might be shorter, and as a consequence the sacrifice of life be reduced to a minimum. Not, however, until the end of May, 1921, did the Government begin seriously to consider

the advisability of putting an end to the clumsy and unworkable system of divided control.

One small amelioration of the situation took place in January, when the railwaymen abandoned their opposition to carrying police or troops or military stores. The men employed on the railways were to the end a source of trouble and anxiety, since it was well known that many of them were rebels to all intents and purposes, and the situation was complicated by the fact that some 20,000 of them belonged to the National Union of Railwaymen, and were apparently looked upon by the general secretary of the union, that genial politician Mr. J. H. Thomas, as perfect lambs in whom there was no guile.

The number of outrages all over the country were at all times heavy, but principally so in Dublin and Cork. As I was discussing the state of the country one day with a gentleman who held a high civic position in County Cork, he suddenly broke out in a strong Irish brogue with : "D'ye know what it is, General, d'ye know what it is?" I told him I wished to heaven I did, for then I might see better how to check the outrages. Drawing his chair close to mine, he slowly and emphatically said : "It's the Phoenician blood." I happened to know that the Phoenicians were supposed in far-away times to have traded in the South, but it had not occurred to me that they could be responsible for the atrocities of the modern gunmen. I told my friend that no doubt that accounted for the Irish of to-day accepting a half-breed Spaniard for their leader, a thing I could not understand in a people who were never tired of talking of their ancestry.

It was during the early part of January, 1921, that the agents of the American White Cross Society put in an appearance at Dublin, and established themselves for a time at the Mansion House. The rebel propaganda campaign had been most successful in America, where apparently it was firmly believed that the Irish were in the last stage of starvation. In addition to

the collection of funds by de Valera for the purchase of arms to maintain his gunmen, two individuals, Messrs. France and McCoy, arrived in Ireland to distribute White Cross moneys which had been raised for the ostensible purpose of relieving distress in the country, but in reality in order to assist the rebels in their struggle against the Government. Of distress there was little, except such as was caused by rebel action in destroying means of communication and murdering those bread-winners, especially ex-soldiers, who were suspected of being antagonistic or lukewarm towards the gunmen and their methods. In towns such as Dublin and Cork municipal funds were at a low ebb, but this was purely due to unbusinesslike methods and to the refusal of the town councils to submit their accounts to Government audit, and the consequent temporary withholding of the grants.

The two American representatives came to see me and to discuss their programme, and endeavoured to persuade me that they were quite impartial and only desired to distribute their funds to the best advantage, irrespective of political or religious creed. I told them I was glad to hear it, and hoped that the families of murdered policemen and ex-soldiers would share in the distribution. One of these gentlemen had been a Labour partisan at a place called Seattle, where, apparently on account of his extreme views, he had lost his seat on the Port Commission, and though put forward as a candidate for the Senate failed to get elected. The other gentleman struck me as being particularly glad to escape from the bonds of prohibition, and neither of them inspired me with any confidence that they would not do everything possible to assist the rebels. And so it proved. The greater part of their money was distributed under the ægis of Sinn Féin, to whom it was a direct assistance in the attempt to overthrow British rule.

During the month of May, 1921, the American Government evidently began to get a little anxious about the activities of this White Cross, especially as their Consul-General, who was well

posted in all that was going on, and who maintained an admirably correct attitude, had no use for his countrymen's charitable filibustering expedition, and no doubt had reported to Washington accordingly. A reply to an inquiry from Washington was sent to the effect that the information on which the White Cross activities was based was unfounded, and that relief other than that which was at any moment available from British sources was not required.

About a month later Mr. France came to see me again, and told me that about £100,000 had been distributed, of which £35,000 had gone to Belfast to assist the unemployed there, and a considerable amount towards meals for schoolchildren in Dublin and elsewhere. As a result of our conversation I gathered that at least £20,000 had found its way into the hands of the rebels for purposes directly opposed to the interests of our Government. He showed me a list of a thousand Protestants who were advocates of the White Cross which was so obviously faked as to be ludicrous.

Having told him that if at any time martial law was declared throughout the country I should be obliged to arrange for him to be conducted on board ship, I could not help "pulling his leg" by suggesting that if he liked to rebuild the Custom House, which the Irish had just burnt down, there would be no objection on the part of the authorities, and then it would stand for all time (unless the Irish burnt it down again) as a monument of the practical interest of the Americans in President Wilson's policy of the rights of small nations. Mr. France, however, thought that such an effort would exhaust the whole of his fund.

What eventually happened to these gentlemen I do not know, but two influential men came over from the States during the summer, apparently to investigate their activities, and after the truce in July the White Cross ceased to be of interest. I have often wondered if the United States should ever be faced with a

situation similar to that which existed between the Irish rebels and Great Britain, and assistance was sent by the British public to those opposing the Government, whether the British representatives would be allowed the same freedom as that which was accorded to the White Cross delegates. I fancy not.

Although outwardly there was little change in the situation all over the country during the early months of 1921, and outrages were if anything more frequent, reaching their height in March, the indications were favourable, and in encounters between the troops and rebels the latter received some salutary lessons, especially during engagements which took place near Mourne Abbey and Clonmult in February.

At the same time peace was in the air. Early in February I received information from a source which had always proved reliable that at a meeting of Sinn Fein leaders, among whom were de Valera, Michael Collins, and Father O'Flanagan, written proposals from Mr. Lloyd George were produced for a settlement, which included fiscal control. De Valera and Collins, according to my informant, were in favour of a settlement, but were overridden by the extremists. Not having been taken into the confidence of the Government I do not know if this was true, but am inclined to think it was, and it may have had reference to the intervention of Archbishop Clune ; if so, it accounts for the cup-and-ball game between repression and conciliation that went on during the first half of 1921. It is quite possible that if the surrender of arms had not been insisted upon results might have followed. Michael Collins himself could not have secured disarmament at that time any more than he was able to do so when the Free State came into being.

On 14th February, an annoying incident happened at Kilmainham Prison. A man named Teeling, who had been convicted as one of the men who carried out the murders on 21st November, and was under sentence of death, escaped with the connivance of

two soldiers employed as warders, who had been heavily bribed. The man was never recovered, but after the truce reappeared in his native village as a lieutenant of the I.R.A. and received a great ovation. A few days after this man's escape came the kidnapping of that gallant old lady Mrs. Lindsay, who, by passing on to the troops information given her by the parish priest, enabled them to frustrate a rebel ambush. Mrs. Lindsay was warned not to remain in her house, which could not be protected indefinitely, but she refused to leave, and was eventually murdered after undergoing great hardship. The rebels endeavoured to bargain with her life against the lives of men who had been condemned to death after trial. While I would have gone to great lengths to save the gallant lady's life I could not listen to such a proposal, which would have resulted in the kidnapping of loyal or influential persons every time a death sentence was passed on a rebel.

To steady the troops under the provocation to which they were daily and hourly exposed it was necessary every now and again to publish a General Order reminding them of their duty and encouraging them to persevere in upholding the credit of the Army, which, after all, was of far more importance to the soldier than all the political spasms to solve the Irish riddle. On 25th February, 1921, the following order was issued :—

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

by

GEN. RT. HON. SIR C. F. N. MACREADY, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,  
Commanding-in-Chief, Ireland.

General Headquarters, Ireland, Parkgate, Dublin.

Friday, February 25th, 1921.

During the last few days two appalling outrages have been committed by the rebels against the troops in Ireland.

On February 22nd, 1921, three unarmed soldiers of the Oxf. and Bucks. L.I. were captured and shot in cold blood at



Woodford, Co. Galway. On February 23rd, 1921, unarmed soldiers of the Essex Regiment were kidnapped at Bandon and murdered.

Quite apart from the savagery which has always been a marked feature of the tactics employed by the rebels, there is no doubt but that these crimes are a deliberate attempt to exasperate the troops and tempt them to break the bonds of discipline, thereby providing copy for that scurrilous campaign of propaganda on which the rebel leaders so much rely for sympathy in Great Britain and abroad.

The Commander-in-Chief looks to the troops, even in the face of provocation such as would not be indulged in by the wildest savages of Central Africa, to maintain the discipline for which the British Army is, and has always been, so justly renowned. It is only by the maintenance of that discipline that our ultimate object, the restoration of peace in Ireland, will be achieved.

Just as this order was published the first signs of interference by the civil courts in the martial law area appeared in the shape of writs which were served on two Brigade Commanders for damage incidental to authorized reprisals. I wired down instructions that acceptance of the writs was to be refused, and no more was heard about them. It was, however, the thin end of the wedge which later on caused considerable stir in legal and political circles. Early in March, being called over to London, and having to attend an Irish debate in the House of Commons, I had a good opportunity of sampling the efforts of the rebel propaganda to blacken the character of the troops.

Sitting in a state of considerable boredom in that very uncomfortable official pew behind the Speaker's chair, I suddenly became aware of a head and a hand and a telegraph form, which all popped up over the edge of the pew. They belonged to Commander Kenworthy, who asked me if I was General Macready, and went on to say that the Chief Secretary had told him that I would attend to his telegram. The telegram was from one of the McSwiney family in Cork to the effect that, during an execution in Cork Prison a few days before, the crew of the armoured car at the gate had danced round their car singing ribald songs among the people

who were kneeling around praying, an observance that always took place when executions were carried out within a prison. I read it twice, and, handing it back to its owner, simply said : "It's a damned lie." Commander Kenworthy, not being satisfied, asked me to take it and make inquiry, which I did on my return to Dublin next day.

The young officer who was in command of the armoured car was, judging by his report, nearly as angry as I had been, perhaps more so. He said that so far from there being any noise he had been struck at the time with the behaviour of the crew. They were all young soldiers, and were evidently impressed by the solemnity of the occasion, remaining inside the car and preserving the utmost quiet ; the officer and one man, who was oiling the car, being the only ones outside.

I passed this on to Commander Kenworthy, telling him that I was endeavouring to secure the original telegram from the post office, and that if I was successful I should bring the sender before a court-martial. This evidently upset him, as he wrote at once to say that communications of that kind were privileged, to which I replied that I was unable to accept his view. As a matter of fact, I knew all the time that it was most unlikely that we could get the original copy, the post office at Cork being staffed with rebel sympathizers. In the end we did not get the original, but I had the satisfaction of proving, what had long been suspected, that this member of Parliament was in close touch with some of the most extreme rebels and instigators of murder.

It has always struck me as curious that none of the ardent supporters of the rebels in Parliament ever came over to Ireland to see their friends, for, so long as they had kept away from the police and soldiers, they would have been quite safe.

On my return to Dublin I was greeted with the news of the murder of one of my Brigade Commanders, Colonel Cummings, who was killed in an ambush near Killarney, the armoured car

which escorted him becoming unfortunately ditched, and the hilly country in which the occurrence took place being so thickly covered with gorse right down to the roadside that it was impossible to locate the rebels until they opened fire. As president of the inquiry into the shootings at Mallow, Colonel Cummings had gained the esteem and confidence of all the parties concerned, and, as the Commander of the Kerry Brigade, was placed in a position of greater danger and difficulty than that of probably any Brigade Commander in the country.

March, 1921, was marked by a particularly heavy toll of outrage on the part of the rebels. All over the country ex-soldiers, Protestant farmers, and others were dragged from their houses and murdered in cold blood, many of the bodies being labelled "convicted spy" or some such libellous statement, for which there was not the slightest foundation, none of the victims having had any association with the Crown forces.

Two murders, those of J. Clancy (the Mayor of Limerick) and O'Callaghan (the ex-Mayor of that town), excited considerable stir at the time, the press, led by Sinn Fein propaganda, endeavouring to fasten the crimes on the Crown forces. Who the assassins were was never discovered, but from papers in the possession of our Intelligence it was known that both these men, and certain priests in Limerick, had exerted themselves to prevent outrages taking place in the town. Further, according to captured correspondence, Clancy had been taken to task by the moving spirits of the I.R.A. for his lack of enterprise as Commander of a Limerick battalion. This correspondence still exists, and judging from the methods of the rebels, not only at that time but at a later period, when the Free State Government was in power, the supposition that these two men were murdered by their compatriots as a warning to others who might be inclined to dissent from the policy of the extremists is by no means extravagant.

During the month of March an inclination was observed on the part of the rebels to concentrate in the South-West, and strong rumours were prevalent of a general rising in Kerry, which I took advantage of to obtain permission to make use of aeroplanes for attacking bodies of rebels with bombs and machine-gun fire, a similar application having been refused in the previous September. While all this hurly-burly was taking place throughout the country nothing effective was being done to counter the rebel propaganda. Those who ruled that organization were masters at the game, unhampered by considerations of truth or fact, and being unopposed in either the British or foreign press, with the exception of, perhaps, one English "daily," had things entirely their own way. Here is a not unamusing instance of their methods. Among certain documents captured in a raid on offices used by the rebels was a letter addressed to Marshal Foch, imploring him to come to the assistance of Ireland. At the bottom of the page in the handwriting presumably of someone in authority was: "This may be sent. If it does not do any good, at all events it will be good propaganda."

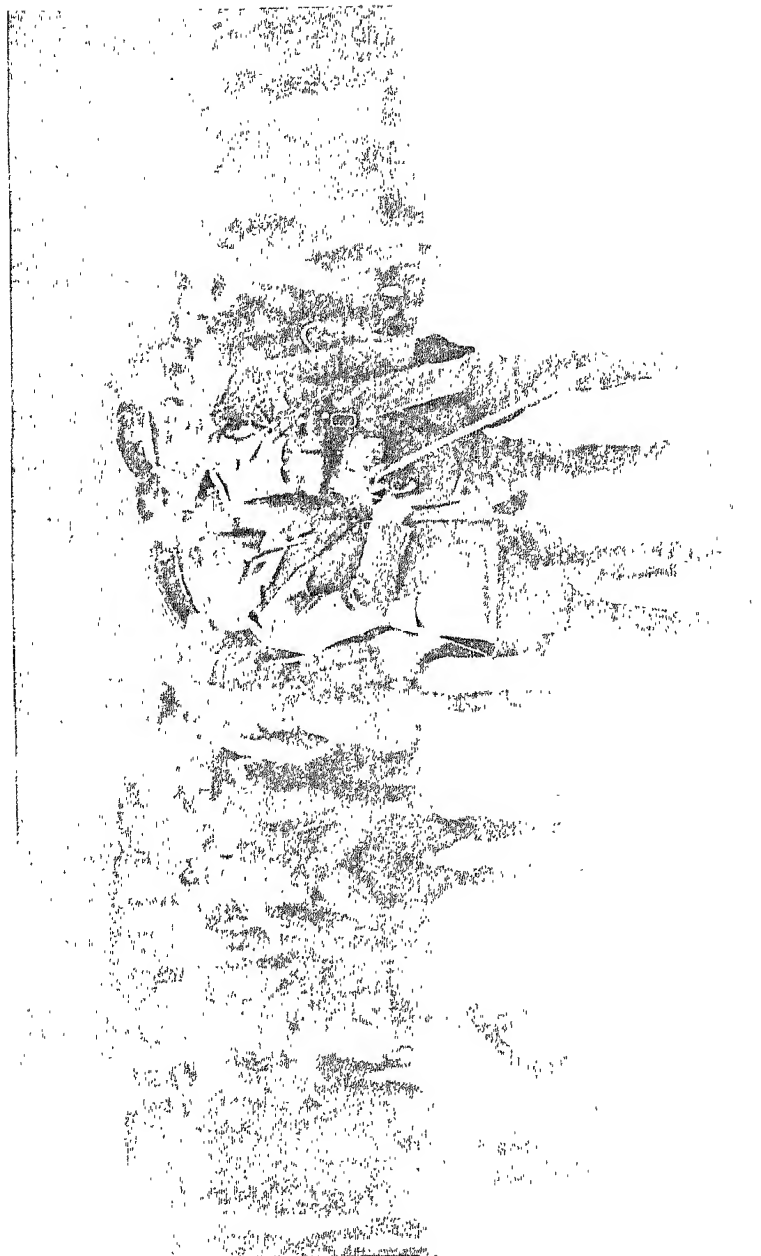
As if there was not enough at the time to occupy everybody in the Island of the Saints, the question of having a General Election cropped up during the month of March, 1921, and the Chief Secretary had visions of candidates standing in opposition to Sinn Fein. I had no doubts on the subject whatever, nor had any of those who lived in the country and were in touch with what was going on. When the elections did eventually take place, every seat, with the exception of Trinity College, went unopposed to the nominees of Sinn Fein, of whom the greater portion were well-known gunmen. Members of the Headquarter Staff of the I.R.A., leaders of flying columns, men in prison, or "on the run" figured prominently in the list, and practically all were members of the I.R.A., or of that still more dangerous society, the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Not a single moderate man

figured in the list, which was carefully checked by my Staff, the antecedents of the elected members being given in each case, and the Castle authorities were asked to give publicity to the results in order to show that the elections represented the fear of the revolver rather than the free choice of the population. Nothing, of course, was done in the matter.

The situation had its humorous side. Where, except in Ireland, or possibly in a South American Republic, could open rebellion, martial law, peace proposals, and a General Election be all running side by side at one and the same time? And yet no Irishman or politician seemed to see anything funny about it! Perhaps the simple-minded soldier is easily amused, and certainly we were over in Ireland.

For several days prior to the so-called elections the Crown forces were given orders to suspend their activities, a very welcome concession to the I.R.A. As the days began to lengthen I looked forward to the prospect of being able to intensify the pressure on the rebels, especially as the War Office had promised a further supply of men to make up for the drafts which had been withdrawn for Indian and Colonial service. The short days and inclement weather in the winter had increased the difficulties and discomforts of both police and troops, and in the towns the long hours of darkness, in spite of the curfew restrictions, were all favourable to the peculiar methods of the rebels.

The hopes that by the beginning of April the troops would be able to commence an intensified programme to harass the rebels and maintain it throughout the summer, received a rude set-back when on the last day of March orders were received from London to hold ten battalions ready for immediate despatch to England in the event of the expected coal strike materializing. Four of these battalions left Ireland during the early days of April, and their unexpected arrival at Liverpool did much to ease the situation in Lancashire.



LORD FRENCH TAKING FAREWELL OF THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY

April 29, 1921



Although no further battalions were called for, the remaining six were obliged to remain concentrated and ready to move at short notice, which rendered them unavailable for active work until the strike collapsed early in May, when the four battalions which had been despatched to England returned. It was a piece of bad luck. A month of good weather was lost, and during May operations were hampered and cut into by the elections.

It may not be uninteresting to give the happenings on two consecutive days in Ireland, days taken at random, and which represent a fair average of the daily life of that unhappy land at that time :—

30th March, 1921 :

Captain C. Lees murdered leaving an hotel in Dublin.

Bomb explosion in Amiens Street, Dublin; two women wounded.

Military lorry seized near Dublin.

Captain W. Good, a retired officer, shot dead in County Cork.

Rioting in Belfast, mob fired on.

31st March, 1921 :

R.I.C. patrol ambushed near Dublin; one killed.

Armoured car attacked near Merrion Square, Dublin.

Attempt to derail train near Tullamore.

Raid by rebels on farmer's house, Monaghan.

Telephone office burnt at Killiney; one death.

It was certainly a land of surprises, and I am not at all sure that conditions have greatly improved now that it has been ruled by its own countrymen for over a year, if one may judge by the evidently censored bits of news which are allowed to find their way into the English papers.

On 1st April, 1921, news came through that Lord French was to be succeeded as Lord-Lieutenant by Viscount Fitzalan of Derwent, who would be saddled with the thankless task of launching the régime of the new Home Rule Act in Northern and Southern Ireland. Sorry as I was at the prospect of parting from my old Chief, with whom, during the time he spent in Ireland, I



had been on terms of the closest intimacy, I was thankful that he should be at last free from the danger he undoubtedly ran at the hands of his misguided countrymen.

At this time the Lord-Lieutenant, whoever he might be, could do little good. The Chief Secretary monopolized such of the civil government as remained, together with the activities of the police outside the martial law area, whilst I avoided as far as possible associating the Lord-Lieutenant with the activities of the troops, as it would only have had the effect of still further incensing the rebels against him, though heaven knows there was little cause for it, for a better Irishman or one more devoted to his country than the Field-Marshal it would have been hard to find. In our private talks he never failed to give me much valuable advice, and there was I think no point on which we did not agree, unless perhaps it was my conviction that there was no half-way house between complete Home Rule and permanent military occupation.

Of course, as soon as the word went round that the new Lord-Lieutenant, who was a Roman Catholic, was coming, tongues began to wag as only Irish tongues can. As Lord Fitzalan found to his cost, the fact of being a Roman Catholic is not necessarily a recommendation to the Irish. In religion, as in all other things, a man must possess the Irish hall-mark, to be acceptable to a nation whose vanity is supreme and whose sense of humour has evaporated, if indeed it ever existed. From what I have seen of the Irish I have often thought that in the past their wit and power of repartee had been mistaken for humour.

As I have said, Dublin was much interested, and for several days Lord Fitzalan was the main topic of conversation. Here is a true story of the time, told me by the person who took part in it. A friend of mine who lived in Ireland, but was not Irish, overheard a conversation between two Irishmen and a woman on the subject of the new Lord-Lieutenant. The men rather thought that it

would be a fine thing to have a Catholic, an opinion with which the woman did not agree. The argument got more and more animated, when the woman, turning suddenly to my friend, said : " And what do you think, would it be a good thing to have a Catholic?" My friend, who knew the ways of the natives, promptly answered : "I don't think it matters, for if you had God Almighty you would not be satisfied." The woman, without hesitation, replied : "And why, indeed, should we be? Wasn't He in the world thirty-three years, and precious few were satisfied with His rule!"

An example of the curious and, indeed, dangerous ways in which things were done under the régime then in force occurred when it was discovered by the military Intelligence that a brother of Richard Mulcahy, one of Michael Collins's chief lieutenants, was employed in the General Post Office at Dublin. I sent on the information to the Castle people and suggested that if it was undesirable to remove him from the service he might be transferred to some place in the North where he could do no harm. In the end he remained where he was, as it was considered by the civil authorities that it would be a hardship to move him, there being no evidence that he was in league with his brother, who directed the activities of the I.R.A. The leakage in the post offices in Ireland was one of the most fruitful sources of information to the rebels, and many a man lost his life through the tampering with letters by men and women employed in the offices.

The aged Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Walsh, died about this time, and as a matter courtesy, especially as on two occasions he had come to see me to plead for condemned men, I told a senior officer belonging to the Catholic faith to arrange to go to the funeral as my official representative. However, the secretary of the late Archbishop came to ask me not to send anyone, as the younger members of the funeral committee objected. I told him I was sorry that death did not wipe out for the moment any

differences there might be between our views, but that in any case I should half-mast the flags, which I did. On the same day that this occurred I wrote to Henry Wilson on another subject :—

“ Punchestown Races went off quite successfully yesterday, and I believe the same is happening to-day. I hear incidentally that our Michael (Collins), or some other high official, passed the word round that races were not to be interfered with, and, by the way, I hear that they murdered their pal who shot a policeman at the grand-stand at Navan last week. This is all as it should be, and as long as they keep quiet they shall race.”

Talking of murdering—and at that time few days passed without some reference to it—information came in that the rebel headquarters had kindly told off five men to “do me in,” as it is termed in the barrack-room slang. Nothing happened ; indeed, during the whole time I was in Ireland I only twice ran into any shooting, once from a party of Rory O'Connor’s adherents, who were holding a house against their own Provisional Government, and once from a party of police, who apologized profusely afterwards.

From the time of the November murders in 1920 until the time we finally left Ireland my car was usually escorted by a “Tin Annie,” as the soldiers called the armoured cars, the idea being that the murder of a prominent official, whether civil or military, would have a more stimulating effect on the rebel rank and file than smaller fry. The restriction of not being able to go about as one wished was one of the worst features of service in Ireland, nor was it alleviated after the Government had come to terms with the rebels, because the Republican party were only too anxious to commit outrages in the hope of creating trouble between Arthur Griffith’s party and the British Government.

During the month of April, 1921, in spite of so many battalions of infantry being immobile on account of the coal strike in England, the first of a series of “drives” took place in the Midlands and West. These “drives” were, on a smaller scale, much on the

same plan as those during the South African War. Several cavalry regiments, accompanied by armoured cars and police, worked slowly across a selected stretch of country, visiting all houses and interrogating every individual met with, infantry being employed as required to stop gaps.

The results, so far as the actual capture of prominent rebels was concerned, were not great, but the effect on the inhabitants, and the uneasiness which the unexpected appearance of a large force of cavalry created in the minds of members of the I.R.A. posing as peaceful agriculturalists, was excellent. From a training point of view nothing could have been better than these "drives" both for men and horses, and, had the truce not put a stop to further operations, it is probable that the results during the later summer, when officers and men had become thoroughly trained to the work and greater numbers were available, would have given tangible results.

On 29th April, 1921—the anniversary, curiously enough of the laying of the foundation stone of the Royal Hospital by the great Duke of Ormonde in 1680—Lord French took his farewell of the General Officers and Staff of the Irish Command in the Great Hall of the Hospital, afterwards inspecting and saying good-bye to the old pensioners drawn up in the quadrangle. The following day he left Kingstown by mail-boat, a guard of honour of the Wiltshire Regiment giving him the last salute on Irish soil. Though it was not without a wrench at one's heart strings that an official connection dating back to the drizzly night on the kopjes of Elandslaagte should be brought to a close, it was with intense relief that I saw the Chief safely on board ship, feeling that I was at last free from anxiety for his safety which had weighed on me for the past year.

That the Army in Ireland, many of whom had served under him in France, might participate in the Field-Marshal's farewell, the following Special Order was published and distributed to all ranks—

## Annals of an Active Life

## SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

by

GEN. RT. HON. SIR C. F. MACREADY, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,  
Commanding-in-Chief, Ireland.

General Headquarters, Ireland, Parkgate, Dublin.

Monday, May 2nd, 1921.

His Excellency Field-Marshal Rt. Hon. Viscount French, K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., having expressed his desire to take a formal farewell of the Army serving in Ireland, was received by me at the Royal Hospital, Dublin, on the 29th April, the General Officers Commanding the 5th Division and Dublin District, together with members of their Staffs and of General Headquarters, being present.

His Excellency, in his speech, expressed his thanks to both officers and men for their splendid conduct and discipline in most trying circumstances. It was a deplorable thing, he said, that they, who by their courage, skill, and perseverance had brought to a successful conclusion the greatest war in history, after four years of hard fighting, should have been compelled by disloyal and traitorous enemies of the Crown to take up arms in its defence once more, but he had absolute confidence that those great qualities which they had already shown would carry their present task, disagreeable though it was, to a successful conclusion. He wished the Army in Ireland a speedy release from their labours and that they would soon attain that rest and quiet to which they were justly entitled.

He asked me to convey to the troops under my command His Excellency's appreciation of the magnificent support they had afforded him during his term of office.

C. F. N. MACREADY, General.

During the time I was in Ireland I endeavoured to lose no opportunity of ascertaining the opinions of the senior officers holding responsible positions in every part of the country. It may be of interest to give some results of my inquiries during the spring of 1921 on different points.

## THE TROOPS.

- (a) Generally there is a leaning to complete the period of service in Ireland as early as possible and get back quickly to normal life. The behaviour of the troops, both officers and men, has been, and is, exemplary.

- (b) The morale is excellent.
- (c) The troops remain in good heart, easy to handle, and keen in participating in operations, but thoroughly bored with the endless guard duties and restrictions to freedom. They appear to treat the civilians as they did the Germans—"a thing apart."
- (d) The behaviour of the troops has been excellent, and they are very popular with the law-abiding local inhabitants. Every man would always volunteer to go out on the least sign of a fight.

## LOYALISTS.

- (a) I would say that their action is very passive. Whether they know things or not I cannot say, but I do not think any try to be any assistance in the way of intelligence.
- (b) Practically no such thing as a Unionist remains. I can see no sign of any effort to help the Government, but in the present state of affairs it is impossible to blame individuals. The country gentry remain as a class loyal, hospitable, and genial, but they have no authority, and the demoralizing life which they are leading must lead in the end to loss of self-respect and indolence.
- (c) Of this class, it may be they could give us "news," but if they did they would be shot by the I.R.A., their farm-servants giving them away. Excise officers and school teachers are usually Sinn Feiners, and work against the Government.
- (d) The general loyalist hopes for Dominion Home Rule of some kind. He has not, and never had, much faith in the British Government. Few in these counties are reliable. The farmer class as a rule are governed by the gunmen. Few dare use arms, if they had them, against their oppressors. They go unwillingly and pray for a settlement, provided they have nothing to do with obtaining it.
- (e) Personally I have no very high opinion of the politic value of the loyalist. He is too ceaseless in his complaints against the Government, and is too full of the "if only" spirit in the past tense. He is too fond of saying: "If only the Government had done so-and-so in the past," forgetful of the fact that he himself had advised the Government not to do it at the time.

As regards Government officials, it is an effort of memory to think of any who are functioning in any way.

- (f) The attitude of the leading loyalists is correct but subdued. The vast majority of the inhabitants are tired of the Sinn Fein movement, but partly from a mistaken idea of loyalty to their kith and kin, and still more from terror of their own lives, will not voice their opinions.

SINN FEIN.

- (a) The movement has absolutely cowed the older and better generation in the country. They dare not express their views. The extremists commit atrocities in order to further intimidate the inhabitants and prevent our Intelligence getting information. They are meeting our counter-measures by an active propaganda based on a far better system than ours, which appears negligible.
- (b) In my opinion the country is too large for us to hope to clear the active Sinn Feiners right out, unless the general public join in and help, and for that we shall have to wait a couple of years till their pockets are empty.
- (c) The effect of our action against the extremists is not as good as it should be, the general feeling being that the leaders sit well away, and nothing happens to them, while the fools pay for it. The oath and secret society methods have a great effect. I suggest a sound and thoroughly organized propaganda in this country, Great Britain, and foreign countries.

These were the opinions of men who were in hourly touch with the various elements among whom they lived, and whose ideas had gradually shaped themselves without bias or partiality towards any particular section of the population or political creed.

On 2nd May, 1921, the ceremony of swearing in the new Lord-Lieutenant, Viscount Fitzalan of Derwent, took place in the Council Chamber of Dublin Castle. Although perforce stripped of its pageantry and ceremonial, the occasion was one of historical interest in that Lord Fitzalan was the first Roman Catholic Lord-Lieutenant since the short reign of Tyrconnel from 1687 to 1690. The Council Chamber, though a small room, was quite large enough to accommodate those whose curiosity outweighed possible attentions by the gunmen on the way thither, the spectators numbering about thirty or forty Privy Councillors and officials,

some of them accompanied by their wives. At the end of the Council table sat three Lord Justices, Sir John Ross, the Recorder of Dublin, and myself, with hats on, according to custom and precedent.

When all was ready a side door opened from which emerged a small procession, of which the most notable figures were the Chief Secretary, bearing the Sword of State, its hilt firmly supported on his ample waistcoat; the Athlone Pursuivant, carrying the insignia of the Order of St. Patrick, and Ulster King of Arms, the Letters Patent and the Royal Warrant of Appointment. Lord Fitzalan followed with various other officials, and on reaching the table at which the Lord Justices were seated was, after various formalities, sworn in on a Douai bible by Cope.

The Sword of State and the insignia of St. Patrick having been presented, the Lord-Lieutenant, assuming his hat, took his seat, the Lord Justices at the same time removed their head-gear, and, automatically dropping their temporary titles of "Their Excellencies," subsided into ordinary Privy Councillors. I doubt if among the long line of Lord-Deputies and Lord-Lieutenants any had assumed office under more adverse circumstances, or at greater personal risk than the last holder of the post, who may truly be said to have taken his life in his hands as a duty to the State.

There was an impression in some quarters that the fact of being a Catholic would render Lord Fitzalan immune from the attentions of Michael Collins and his gunmen. Personally I did not share it, because to all appearances the Irish were more incensed against English Catholics, on account of their protests against the supine attitude of the Irish Catholic Bishops, than against persons of other religions. In religion, as in all else, the Irishman is a law unto himself, and had the Pope seen fit to denounce the atrocities committed by his Hibernian flock a movement would assuredly



have taken place towards a religious Republic founded on purely Irish ideals.

A few days after the installation of Lord Fitzalan, and on account of his departure for London, the first Roman Catholic Lord Justices since the days of James II. were sworn in, a Douai bible being again used for the purpose.

During the first week in May a meeting took place between Sir James Craig and Michael Collins which led to an out-pouring of prophecy on the part of the press, but had no influence on the situation. At the same time I received a hint from high quarters that for the present, on account of the Craig-Collins meeting, the death penalty should not be exacted in cases of rebels found carrying arms, although the activities of the troops should not be relaxed.

The spasmodic movements of the political pendulum were indeed difficult to cope with, and were, of course, far beyond the comprehension of the regimental officer who was risking his life daily, to say nothing of the rank and file. It was about this time that rumours of unrest came from the borders of Monaghan and Roscommon, where men of the I.R.A. were reported to be crossing into Ulster, a movement that later on caused considerable trouble, and eventually led to the setting-up of a Border Commission which, in spite of the efforts of the Army representatives, proved of little value owing to the want of co-operation on the part of the representatives of Northern and Southern Ireland.

It was immediately after the elections that the star of "Andy" Cope began to rise above the horizon of troubled Ireland, and I imagine that it was at that time that he received his orders from Mr. Lloyd George to get in touch with the rebel leaders. Be that as it may, on the night of 18th May, 1921, he came to ask my opinion about releasing Arthur Griffith—who, it will be remembered, was arrested after the murders on 21st November,

1920—and John MacNeill.\* I told him that I had no opinion to offer on the subject, and that nothing could make the situation a bigger farce than it already was ; that all I wanted was one of two perfectly simple issues : either to get out of the country or to be given the means of getting on with the work. Cope and I were very good friends ; but, though always glad to hear his news, I had no intention of being drawn into the political whirlpool into which he had plunged.

In the meantime the I.R.A. had not allowed elections or peace talk to interfere with their activities. On the day after the elections a district inspector of the R.I.C., a military officer, a civilian, and two ladies motoring near Newport, Tipperary, were attacked by a band of rebels, the district inspector being killed by the first fire. The officer, having expended all his ammunition, managed to escape to give the alarm, the rebels continuing to fire at the unarmed civilian and the ladies, one of whom was killed and the other wounded, her assailants telling her that "it served her right." The following day—15th May—a district inspector, his wife, and two officers were murdered in County Galway.

The number of outrages during May amounted to over one hundred, the last day of the month being marked by a particularly brutal affair, in which seven soldiers were killed and nineteen wounded, of whom four of the killed and three of the wounded were band-boys. A party of the Hampshire Regiment, doing their musketry at Youghal, County Cork, were marching to the ranges accompanied by the band. Ordinary military precautions were taken, but no rebels were seen or known to be in the vicinity. Two country yokels were noticed sitting on a hillside, a couple of hundred yards from the road, apparently engaged in the *dolce far niente* so dear to the Irish peasant. As the band came opposite to these men an explosion occurred in the road, inflicting the casualties above mentioned. A mine, which had been carefully

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\* John MacNeill, M.P. (S.F.). National University, Ireland.

laid and concealed, was exploded by the two men who, in spite of being fired at, stole away across country, the spot for the outrage having no doubt been selected as offering facilities for escape.

The information from all sources made it evident that the outbreak of murders between 13th and 20th May, fourteen in all in various parts of the country, had been planned by the I.R.A. headquarters to coincide with the elections.

Closely following these outrages came the destruction of the Custom House on 25th May, one of the most beautiful buildings in Dublin. The place was not guarded, nor was it of any tactical value to the Crown forces, its destruction being an act of deliberate and uncalled-for vandalism carried out by the orders of the Dail Eireann. A party of rebels suddenly rushed the building, shot a customs official who tried to give the alarm, saturated the place with petrol, and set fire to it. Directly the outrage was discovered two companies of the Auxiliary Police were rushed to the scene and in the scrimmage that ensued seven rebels were killed, ten wounded, and seventy made prisoners. It is difficult to understand the mentality of people who, by the destruction of one of the few outstanding public buildings of the capital, inflicted irreparable damage on their own country without in any way affecting the action of the Crown forces against whom they were fighting.

As if to emphasize the total loss of a national sense of humour a demonstration was held in the following year under the auspices of the Free State Government on the anniversary of the exploit to commemorate "the Victory of the Customs House." This act of incendiarism was followed up by the destruction of the the Army Service Corps repair shop on the opposite side of the Liffey to the Kingsbridge railway station. On the evening of 3rd June, some of us were playing tennis in the Royal Hospital garden when, about 6 p.m., heavy smoke was seen issuing from what seemed to be the railway station just below the Hospital

grounds. On sending to find out what the trouble was word came that it was the repair shop which had been established in what during the Great War had been the shell factory. The workmen and clerks had all left work at about 5 p.m., and the fire had gained such a firm hold that the whole building and large quantities of motor stores were completely destroyed.

An inquiry was held, and though no actual proof was forthcoming there was little doubt that the fire was caused by incendiary bombs with delayed action which were left concealed by some of the civilian employees when they left off work at 5 p.m. Thanks to the efforts made by the Quartermaster-General's department at the War Office in replacing the necessary stores without delay, little inconvenience was felt by the troops, nor were their activities interfered with. The destruction of this building was due to no lack of precaution or foresight, but merely to the necessity of employing civilian labour, a danger to which every Government department in Ireland was exposed. It was surprising that more incidents of the kind did not occur, and that places like the Castle, the Royal Hospital, and General Headquarters, at all of which numbers of civilians were employed, did not share the fate of the shell factory.

The numerous cases of incendiarism instigated by the rebel headquarters at Dublin which simultaneously made their appearance in England undoubtedly helped to stiffen the back of the Cabinet to decide that, if a solution was not reached by 12th July, martial law would be declared over the whole of Ireland, exclusive of the six Ulster counties, and in the meantime all available troops, amounting to some nineteen battalions of infantry and a strong force of marines, were to be sent over as soon as possible. In order to reinforce the mounted troops the precedent of the South African War was followed, whereby the personnel of field artillery batteries were converted into mounted rifles. The whole of the infantry reinforcements had arrived in the command by the first

weeks of July, when the truce placed a term on further military activities.

Whether, if the rebels had not composed their differences with the Government, the latter would have had the strength of will or the power in the House of Commons to have carried this decision to its logical conclusion, no man can say; but from information which afterwards came to hand of the state to which the I.R.A. was reduced at the time of the truce, there is no doubt that the activities of the rebels by the winter would have sunk into insignificance, and their cause have been obliterated for the time.

A great deal of nonsense was talked, principally by interested politicians, of the number of troops which would be required to restore tranquillity to the country. The reinforcements to which reference has been made would have brought the Army in Ireland up to a strength of about 80,000 men, after making due allowance for the weakness of many infantry units. These numbers, together with the police and a civilian staff of some hundreds to assist the civil side of the work, especially the organization of a system of identity cards throughout the country, would have been ample for the work in hand. If, however, the negotiations had broken down in December, 1921, at the time of the treaty, and a renewal of the policy of coercion become necessary, a force of probably 150,000 men would have been essential, because during the five months which intervened between the truce and the treaty the rebel forces had been recruited and reorganized, quantities of arms and ammunition imported, and, above all, the military and police Intelligence services had been reduced and had lost touch with their objective.

It need hardly be said that the troops welcomed the prospect of a definite policy which they were able to appreciate and understand in place of one which was altogether beyond their comprehension. Each week they saw their officers and comrades

murdered by civilians who invariably escaped, thanks to the supineness or cowardice of the public, and yet no action had been taken against prominent rebels like Arthur Griffith and other members of Dail Eireann who were locked up in Mountjoy Gaol or in internment camps, a mystery which the junior officers and rank and file could not understand. In spite of this, the troops were well in hand, their discipline, health, and keenness being all that could be desired. But this state of restraint could not be indefinitely prolonged, especially as the troops had a strong feeling that their efforts were not appreciated, judging by the accounts they read in the press of debates in Parliament, and of meetings held under the auspices of influential persons.

An additional strain upon their patience was that married men who had been separated from their wives and families during the long years of the Great War found that service in Ireland involved a prolongation of this unsatisfactory and expensive isolation, whilst the unmarried men, except in the larger towns and then only with certain attendant risks, found themselves cut off from the usual amusements of garrison life. I have already referred to the strain upon the officers which, day in and day out, was greater than in actual war. It was, therefore, hardly surprising that the Government should be definitely told that in the opinion of Henry Wilson and myself this state of affairs could not be prolonged through another winter.

No sooner, however, had the decision been reached that a strong line would be taken if a solution was not arrived at by 12th July than the usual wobblings began to make themselves felt. On 3rd June, 1921, the Chief Secretary informed me that all "official reprisals" were to be stopped, as "he feels certain that the discipline is so good that the risk of irregular reprisals is reduced to a minimum." To which I replied: "My own impression is that you are too optimistic in thinking that the discipline of the police will be proof against the withdrawal of authorized reprisals. I

hope you may be right, but personally I hold an opposite view, and it must, of course, be distinctly understood that General Strickland (in the martial law area) will and can take no responsibility in the matter."

At the same time I received orders to delay the execution of a rebel taken in arms in the martial law area pending a decision in consequence of the issue of a writ of habeas corpus by the civil courts, a proceeding which indicated the futility of the so-called martial law in any part of Ireland, and justified the suspicions I had always entertained that martial law in any part of the British Isles could never be carried to a logical conclusion. Indeed the Chief Secretary, unwittingly I imagine, gave the whole case away when in a letter to me at this time he wrote: "Martial law in Ireland means martial law that is supported by the House of Commons." In other words, a soldier charged with the administration of martial law, instead of being a free agent to impose such measures as he might consider necessary, always bearing in mind that such acts must be justified to his Government *after the event*, must consult and obtain the concurrence of the Government *before* taking any step which he, as the man on the spot, considered should be taken to save the situation. For the soldier such a position was impossible. In my reply to the Chief Secretary I stated: "To tell you the truth I am getting thoroughly fed up with this business, as it is quite evident to me that with all the talk that goes on there is not the intention, or apparently the wish, to make it clear to the public in England what is required to go right through with the whole matter."

At the same time that I received the Chief Secretary's definition of martial law, and orders to suspend executions and reprisals, I was informed that the Government refused to arrange for the interned rebels to be transferred to camps or prisons in Great Britain, or, as had been suggested, to some island such as St. Helena. It was a great blow, especially as a few days

before I had received assurances that this would be done, not only on account of the number of troops required to guard the internment camps, but also because these places became centres of disaffection, and, in spite of all precautions, correspondence was carried on between the internees and the executive of Dail Eireann. The internees spent their time in listening to Republican effusions from their leaders, or in planning escape with the connivance of their friends outside, by digging tunnels from under the huts to beyond the barbed-wire fences. A few men escaped in this way, but as a rule the tunnels were discovered before completion. One attempt of this kind was given away in a letter from an internee found in Michael Collins's office during a raid. On another occasion two men hid themselves in a cart that carried the liquid refuse from the camp. Unfortunately for them the sentry on the outer gate, in order to satisfy himself that the cart contained nothing but its legitimate load, prodded the contents several times with his bayonet, and as a result brought a couple of dirty and disconsolate internees out of the swill, with flesh wounds in their legs.

By the middle of June the political wobblings had reached such a pitch, so far as Henry Wilson and I were able to see them, that we had a long and earnest discussion as to whether we should not both of us resign our posts in view of the impossible position in which the Army was placed. For myself, the one and only consideration that prevented my taking such a step was the feeling that it would be a desertion of the officers and men who had played the game so gallantly under such impossible conditions during the time I had held command in Ireland. Both Wilson and I had, besides, a lingering hope that the Government might yet adopt one of the alternatives that he put in his quaint way : "to go all out or to get out." In the end, as is known, they chose the latter, but they took a long time about it.

The rebels in the meantime, determined not to be out of the public eye, and no doubt urged on by their executive, who not



without reason were convinced that they could terrorize the Government into compliance with their demands, instigated riots in Belfast on 11th and 12th June, when four persons were killed and twenty-three wounded.

But the following week-end was marked by a series of murders of a kind that made the police and troops wonder whether the people in England, who were agitating for clemency towards convicted rebels, cared how many of the Crown forces were done to death so long as the perpetrators of murder escaped penalty.

On 19th June a young officer, motoring with two ladies near Dublin, was held up by gunmen, taken out of the car, and severely wounded. He was then put back into the car, which the rebels forced one of the ladies to drive into the Wicklow Hills, where they murdered the officer before her eyes. On the same day Colonel Lambert, commanding the brigade at Athlone, was murdered in his car, and a lady who was one of the party wounded. His death was in a measure due to that disregard for danger which is one of the splendid faults of the British officer. Had he taken his armoured car with him the attack would in all probability not have occurred, or, if it had, would have miscarried. The news of his death was a great blow to me, as we had been friends of long standing, and he had served on my Staff both in the War Office and in France. It is some consolation to know that the man who planned the attack which cost Lambert his life met his death at the hands of his own countrymen some time afterwards, a nemesis which overtook many of the rebels who planned and carried out cold-blooded murder.

On the following day three officers who were kidnapped at Fethard, County Waterford, were found blindfolded and murdered by the roadside. Let it be remembered that in the face of atrocities such as these not a soldier lifted his hand by way of reprisal. Well was it for the Irish that they had not to deal with the troops of



*Topical Press Agency.*

SIR NEVIL MACREADY GREETED BY THE LORD MAYOR OF  
DUBLIN ON ARRIVAL AT THE MANSION HOUSE TO  
ARRANGE TERMS OF TRUCE

8th July, 1921



countries such as Germany and America, whose praises were continually in their mouths.

On 21st June, 1921, with some of my Staff I ran up to Belfast in a destroyer to attend the opening of the Ulster Parliament by the King on the following day. Nothing could exceed the hospitality we received, nor was there any hitch in the arrangements for the Royal visit, which was not without anxiety owing to the fear that wild men from the South might elude the vigilance of the police and attempt to disturb the proceedings by promiscuous bomb-throwing. The streets, which were packed with people who gave a right royal welcome to the King and Queen, were strongly guarded by troops and police, and as an extra precaution soldiers were placed on the roofs of houses with orders to shoot if they saw people on the roofs along the route of the procession. After the formal opening of the Parliament, followed by lunch, Their Majesties proceeded to the Ulster Hall, where addresses were presented, and the King then held an investiture of those who received honours on the occasion.

As I looked at the scene, watching the crowd in the body of the hall, and those who were marshalled up to the platform to receive their honours, I could not help contrasting it with the Belfast of seven years ago, when that hall had been a focus of resistance to the King's Government, and many of the men whom I saw making obeisance to the King had been foremost in promoting what in reality was nothing less than a threat of armed rebellion.

The picture was not quite complete. One looked in vain for the man whose name for so many years had been so closely identified with the province of his adoption. It seemed incongruous that he should have withdrawn himself at a time when the North was about to enter on a phase of existence beset with difficulties and dangers greater than those in which he had played the leading rôle in the past.

By 4 p.m. in the afternoon the celebrations were concluded

and Their Majesties embarked on the Royal yacht for England. It was while at Belfast on this occasion that I gathered that the Prime Minister evidently was not impressed by the representations which had been made to him by Henry Wilson and myself in regard to the attitude of the Army if the state of affairs in the South dragged on indefinitely. He apparently based his opinion on the precedents of the Irish rebellion of 1798, the Boer War, and the European War, being ignorant of the fact that, so far as the daily existence of the troops was concerned, these precedents had no bearing on the points at issue, the conditions being altogether dissimilar. Mr. Lloyd George was by no means alone among politicians I have met in being imbued with the idea that the Crown forces are mere automatons in whom human nature is a factor which does not enter into any scheme that may have the approval of a Government.

The opening of the Northern Parliament was too good an opportunity to be missed by the rebels, who, on account of the precautions taken at Belfast, found it too dangerous to attempt outrages during the King's visit. But two days later, when a squadron of the 10th Hussars who had furnished the King's escort were returning from Belfast, a mine was exploded under the train by which some horses were destroyed and a couple of men injured. The hussars attacked and drove off the rebels, and with considerable personal risk saved fifty horses from the debris of the train.

On the 23rd June, while at Belfast, I received an urgent message to go over to London, and, at the same time, news from Dublin that de Valera had been captured. It appeared that a subaltern and a party of men were searching a house in the Dublin suburbs in which they found a man and two women. The man was marched off to the Castle, the officer being quite ignorant of his identity. At the Castle, on removing his disguise, he was recognized as Eamon de Valera, the Spanish-Hibernian President of the Irish Republic. When he was arrested he told the officer

that if he had known how small the party was he would have made a bolt for it. It is to be regretted that he did not, as in all probability he would have been shot, and much trouble and bloodshed been thereby averted in the future. A telegram was sent to me at Belfast asking directions as to his disposal. I consulted Sir John Anderson, and deferred to his opinion that the former Cabinet decision must be adhered to and the man released, which was accordingly done, much to the annoyance of his captors, who naturally could not understand such Machiavellian policy. In London I learned of the Prime Minister's letter to Sir James Craig and de Valera inviting them to confer with him, General Smuts being deputed to bring de Valera to reason.

Before replying to the Prime Minister's letter de Valera intimated that he wished to consult his colleagues, and as a result Arthur Griffith, Professor J. MacNeill, Michael Staines, E. J. Duggan, and R. C. Barton were set free. Of these, MacNeill had been the Chief of the Staff of the rebels in 1916, and had publicly expressed his approval of the brutal murders of November, 1920. Duggan, at the time of his arrest, had been the Director of Intelligence to the I.R.A. and in virtue of his position bore a heavy share of the responsibility for assassinations throughout the country, while Barton, a cousin of Erskine Childers, had formerly held a commission in the British Army. He was a person of little importance, and probably owed his position in the councils of Dail Eireann to his relationship to Childers.

These releases were followed by others of less importance, and on the last day of June I received instructions to suspend all raids and searches on places occupied or frequented by persons of political importance. In the midst of this waving of the olive branch of peace two police cadets were brutally murdered in Sackville Street with the aid of a girl who acted as decoy.

De Valera accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to a conference on 8th July, 1921.



## CHAPTER XIX.

AT 1-30 p.m. on 8th July, 1921, just as I was about to leave the headquarter office for lunch, Lord Midleton\* and three other representatives of the Southern Unionists were announced. Rumours of a Peace Conference at the Mansion House had filtered through, but I had no official information on the subject, nor did I place much faith in it in view of the repeated failures of similar conferences in the past.

Lord Midleton explained that he thought that certain progress towards a settlement had been made, and wished to know on what terms I could agree to a cessation of military and police activities, showing me at the same time a letter to him from Mr. Lloyd George containing a passage that "as soon as we hear that Mr. de Valera is prepared to enter into conference with the British Government, and cease from all acts of violence, we should give instructions to the troops and to the police to suspend active operations against those who are engaged in this unfortunate conflict."

I told Lord Midleton that since my visit to London, although I had little information as to what was happening, I had given the question of a truce some consideration, thinking it possible that something of the sort might result from Cope's subterranean activities, and would commit the terms to writing and send them to the Mansion House when the conference reassembled between four and five o'clock that day.

Having collected General Boyd, commanding the Dublin

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\* St. John Broderick, Earl of Midleton, K.P. Secretary of State for War, 1900-1903. Secretary of State for India, 1903-1905.



District, Cope as representing at the moment the civil power in Ireland, and General Tudor, the Police Adviser, I read to them the draft of the letter I proposed to send, to which they agreed. One of my aides-de-camp took it down to the Mansion House. For some weeks afterwards this officer was greeted by his friends as the "courier," that being the title bestowed on him by the Irish press then in a state of seething excitement, presumably because he had gone down in plain clothes.

About 5-30 p.m. he returned, bringing back my letter and a message from Lord Midleton asking if I could agree to certain amendments suggested by de Valera which were scribbled on the margin, and which in reality were of no importance. Knowing that Lord Midleton wanted to cross over to England by the night boat, I thought that the quickest way of settling the business was to go down to the conference myself. I happened to be in uniform, not having changed when the day's work was done as I usually did, and that, coupled with the fact of the car being an open one, was I suppose responsible for my appearing in the press next day as a kind of tabloid hero !

I stopped the car short of the entrance, wishing to avoid publicity as much as possible. The crowd, mostly composed of women and boys, had been standing about since the morning, watching people going into and coming out of the Mansion House, and passing the time by reciting the Rosary and telling their beads. It was a hot day, the crowd was fairly tightly packed together, and the resulting atmosphere was not pleasant. When I emerged near the steps on the path which had been kept open from the doorway the Lord Mayor, Larry O'Neil, recognized me and greeted me as if I was his long-lost brother. The crowd began to shout and cheer, one excited and unwashed old dame seized my hand and kissed it, others commending me to their favourite saints. It was a vivid picture of the unstable excitability of a populace who, with tears running down their cheeks, could cheer

to the echo a man who a few hours before, and indeed afterwards, they would have rejoiced to hear had met his death at the hands of the gunmen.

The Lord Mayor, true to his motto of being all things to all people, escorted me into the hall of the Mansion House, where were collected a number of unmistakable gunmen; indeed, after I had passed into the council room my A.D.C. heard them telephoning excitedly to various places in the city the news that I was at the Mansion House. The complimentary effusions in the Irish press on my sudden appearance were rather damped when the efforts of the press photographers were given to the public, because in one picture the outline of my trusty automatic in the right-hand pocket of my coat was painfully conspicuous, and drew down upon my head the wrath of an editor who considered that I should not have spoiled such an occasion by a want of confidence in the people. I learnt many things during the years I spent in the Emerald Isle, but confidence in its people was not one of them.

In the council room, seated round a table, were Lord Midleton, Sir R. Woods, Sir M. Dockrell, Mr. A. Jameson, Arthur Griffith, and Eamon de Valera. I took a chair between Lord Midleton and de Valera, and we began at once to discuss the terms of truce I had put forward. Of the two men Griffith and de Valera, the one who interested me most was Griffith. Those were the days when his stubborn fight for the treaty to which he gave his bond was yet to come, but his whole pose was indicative of a grim determination to carry through anything to which he had put his hand. During the hour or so that I was in the room he sat, a square squat figure, rather huddled up in his chair, hardly uttering a word, and then only a monosyllable, in whose eyes one could read nothing of what might be passing through his mind. During that hour I understood how it was that Arthur Griffith became a great leader of the Irish. He

possessed two priceless essentials for anyone who would dominate the children of Erin. He spoke little, and concealed his own thoughts.

De Valera was a man of a very different stamp. From the moment I sat down next to him I saw that he was play-acting. He was evidently intent on impressing his audience with his importance and businesslike methods. He picked up little insignificant trifles, discussing them as if they were of paramount importance, all the time fidgeting with a pencil or scribbling away on the paper in front of him. Three times while I was there he hurriedly got up and left the room with short, quick steps for no apparent reason, and solely I believe to impress the rest of us with the idea of the weight of responsibility on his shoulders. It would be interesting to know what he did when he got outside ; my own belief is—nothing. The impression I took away of him was that of a highly strung, vain individual of limited outlook, incapable of a broad view on any subject, but an adept at splitting hairs. Future events proved that he was deficient even in physical courage.

Of the two, Griffith struck me as a man who, without magnetism, had many of the attributes of a leader of men, a man upon whom his followers could depend to carry through to the bitter end any step on which he had made up his mind ; de Valera as one who would always play to the gallery and lose himself in a maze of insignificant detail, not altogether uninfluenced by fears for his personal safety. It is difficult to understand by what curious perversion the Southern Irish came to accept this half-breed Spaniard as their leader. Possibly because, in vulgar parlance, he had the gift of the gab, a quality so esteemed and cultivated in the island. The terms for a truce, to which both Griffith and de Valera agreed, were set forth in the following letter to Lord Midleton :—

“ General Headquarters, Ireland,  
Parkgate, Dublin, 8th July, 1921.

My Dear Lord Midleton,

I have just had a conference with General Boyd, commanding the Dublin District, and General Tudor, Chief of Police, at which Mr. Cope attended. The results I have arrived at are as follows:—

In the event of an agreement for cessation of activities being arrived at between the Government and Mr. de Valera, the Chief of Police and myself are agreed that the easing down of activities on the part of the police and military can be enforced as follows:—

- (a) By ceasing raiding, searches, and hold-ups.
- (b) To confine military activities to the support of the police in their normal civil duties.
- (c) The police functions in Dublin to be carried out by the D.M.P.
- (d) To remove curfew restrictions.

It will be, of course, understood that the troops will continue to carry out their ordinary training throughout the country, together with the marches necessary for relief of units. So long as no necessity arises, no movement of troops other than those necessitated by ordinary routine and training will be carried out. I have no objection from a military point of view to movement of troops from England being for the moment stopped, except, of course, those who are already *en route*.

As regards the Auxiliary Police in Dublin, it must be remembered that these men have suffered severely in the past, and that a little time will be necessary before they are convinced that further attempts will not be made upon them.

It would be impossible to prevent either the Auxiliary Police or the R.I.C. from being seen in the streets of Dublin, although not on duty, because, as I have said above, the police work will be done by the D.M.P., but the Chief of Police agrees that if there is no outrage in Dublin during four days from the commencement of the agreement (i.e., 12 noon, Monday, July 11th) he will be prepared to give orders that weapons are not to be carried openly by Auxiliaries and R.I.C. in the town. In country districts it will, I think, be necessary for the police to be armed as heretofore, at all events for the present. If, however, the situation remains quiet, it may be possible in certain parts of the country to dispense with these precautions.

I will communicate with the Chief of Police in regard to the wearing of plain clothes by the Auxiliary Police stationed in Dublin.

If the above arrangements are carried out it will be equally necessary for Mr. de Valera and his supporters to give guarantees that the following points will be observed on the part of their adherents :—

- (a) Attacks on Crown forces and civilians to cease.
- (b) The use of arms to be prohibited.
- (c) No carrying-out of military manœuvres of any kind.
- (d) No interference with Government or private property.
- (e) To discountenance and prevent any action likely to cause disturbance of the peace which might necessitate military interference.

During the continuance of the present arrangements no steps will be taken to occupy abandoned police stations or to quarter troops in new areas unless it is absolutely necessary for purposes of accommodation.

While every endeavour will be made to carry out loyally the conditions I have laid down on the part of the Army and the police, and I am sure that the conditions suggested on behalf of Mr. de Valera's supporters will be equally observed, I must point out that owing to the present state of the country there exist individuals who are likely to commit breaches of the peace, more or less serious, for their private ends, and such occurrences may well have the effect of disturbing the atmosphere of goodwill, and result in mutual recriminations. In order, so far as possible, to avoid this, I suggest that it is imperative that Mr. de Valera should nominate some person with whom I can immediately get in touch, or who could get in touch with me, in the event of reports being received of outrages having been committed, so that without any delay the matter might be inquired into, and such steps taken at once as would restore conditions which it is believed are desired on both sides.

I should be glad to know from you as soon as it is possible whether this move is likely to materialize, so that there may be no delay in the issue of orders to the various forces throughout the country.

Yours very sincerely,

C. F. N. MACREADY."

The doubts which I, in common with all the senior officers of the Army and police, had in regard to the good faith of de Valera's

followers, were only too well justified by events, but it must be remembered that at the time the conditions of the truce were drawn up it was understood to be merely in the nature of an armistice to be in operation for a matter of a few weeks, by which time the Cabinet in London would have either come to a permanent arrangement with de Valera or have placed matters on a footing applicable to a long period of uncertainty.

As soon as complete agreement had been reached round the council table I returned to the Royal Hospital, and telephoned the result to the Prime Minister, who at that time had not received de Valera's letter expressing a readiness to meet and discuss the basis of a conference. Thus ended a somewhat epoch-making day.

A few days later I received the two following notes from Lord Midleton, the first one of which is important in the light of what occurred on the day following the truce conference :—

11th July, 1921.

“ Dear Sir Nevil,

I am much obliged to you for the amended draft which you have sent me, and which entirely carries out what was discussed on Friday afternoon at the Mansion House. I hope the observance on both sides will be absolute, and that the excellent understanding which appears to prevail in Dublin may be extended to other parts of Ireland.

Yours very truly,

MIDLETON.

My best thanks for the help you gave. Your tact and firmness were invaluable in the settlement.

M.”

July 11th/21.

A communication was sent to the press on the night of 8th July embodying the terms of the truce as agreed to by de Valera and Griffith, and orders were telegraphed to the various commands that the truce would begin at 12 noon on 11th July, 1921, until which time the troops, while taking no risks, should abstain as far as possible from unnecessary activity against the

rebels, who, as events proved, far from imitating such chivalrous forbearance, continued their campaign of outrage and assassination until the clocks struck twelve on 11th July. It is instructive to note the result of their activities on 11th July alone up to the hour of noon :—

- (a) A constable killed and a magistrate kidnapped.
- (b) Dublin bank raided.
- (c) Armagh post office raided for constabulary letters.
- (d) Two constables wounded at Goold's Cross.
- (e) Ambush at Baillicborough.
- (f) Major O'Connor, J.P., Rochestown, murdered.
- (g) Military patrol attacked at Castleisland; three killed and three wounded; four rebels killed.
- (h) Miss Dillon killed in a raid by armed men at Clonmel.
- (i) Police barracks at Nobber and Gurtgarrybeg attacked.
- (j) Colonel Cosby's Castle at Glenart burnt.
- (k) Attack upon Greencastle coastguards' station.
- (l) House of Mr. Tisdall, near Trim, destroyed.

It was not encouraging to read accounts of "the enthusiastic reception in London" of the men who were responsible for such a tale of outrage on the very morning of the day on which they had agreed that activities should cease.

I had not long to wait before de Valera's followers attempted to upset the pact entered into at the Mansion House. On the day following the Mansion House conference, at 1.45 p.m., Cope arrived at General Headquarters with Messrs. Duggan and Barton to discuss the terms of my letter to Lord Midleton. They produced a typewritten document containing conditions to be imposed on the Crown forces not only far in excess of those to which de Valera and Arthur Griffith had agreed, but drawn up in terms which were little less than impertinent. This they proposed that I should sign. I pointed out to them that I had already signed the only document on the subject to which I intended to put my hand, my letter to Lord Midleton, and that,

so far as I was concerned, the terms of the truce were perfectly intelligible and straightforward as a temporary arrangement until such time as the British Government placed the whole situation on a more permanent footing.

The two Sinn Fein representatives then took the line that the terms of truce as published in the press were not framed in such a way as to be understood by their adherents, or to ensure obedience on their part. The obvious retort was that on the previous day de Valera and Griffith had had every opportunity to discuss the proposals, and had in fact suggested a few amendments which had been embodied in the final letter to Lord Midleton, but at the same time I agreed that if a different wording, which did not in any way alter or enlarge the original terms, would be more comprehensible to the men of the I.R.A. I would raise no objection. After considerable discussion Messrs. Duggan and Barton seemed contented with what was merely a verbose version of the original terms.

The interview was not a particularly comfortable one, for Cope, who at the moment was the senior civil representative of the Government in Ireland, was so feverishly anxious that no hitch should occur in the *pourparlers* with de Valera that he seemed prepared on behalf of the police to give away everything demanded by the two Sinn Feiners. He also appeared to possess a blind and touching belief in the good faith of the rebels which I was far from sharing. Apart from this it was the first occasion on which, in order to carry out the duties entrusted to me by the Government, I was obliged to come into personal contact with men who were deeply involved in the campaign of murder against the Army and police. Barton, who had held a commission in the British Army, was actively employed in Dublin during the rebellion of 1916, when Duggan was a prisoner in his hands.

On the following day a notice appeared in the Irish press giving the form of words selected by Messrs. Duggan and Barton,



and adding with a touch of truly native inaccuracy that the original announcement issued from General Headquarters had been merely "a draft." A circular was thereupon issued to the troops to the following effect :—

In order to avoid any possible misconstruction of the terms referred to in G.H.Q. official statements and those issued as a supplement to *The Irish Bulletin*, it is notified for information that the wording of the G.H.Q. official statement is taken from the letter written by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief to Lord Midleton (and agreed to in principle by Mr. de Valera), and is in no sense a draft. The wording as issued in *The Irish Bulletin* is their interpretation of the same terms issued after discussion at G.H.Q. in a form more acceptable to Mr. de Valera's adherents. The spirit of the two documents is identical.

I requested Cope to clear the matter up in the press, but this he declined to do, fearful, no doubt, that it would annoy Sinn Fein.

The whole affair, irritating as it was at the time, was merely a prelude to the general disregard by the I.R.A. during the following five months of every condition agreed to by de Valera as published in the papers by Sinn Fein after the visit of Messrs. Duggan and Barton to G.H.Q. Murders and kidnapping continued, though not to the same extent as before the truce ; arms were freely imported and constantly in evidence, drilling and manœuvres by the I.R.A. were a weekly occurrence, often under the inspection of the heads of the I.R.A. ; the burning of houses was unchecked, and hardly a day passed that provocation of some sort to the Crown forces did not take place. I had hoped that the persons nominated to act in liaison with the General Officers throughout the country would have helped to smooth over the difficulties that arose almost daily, but unfortunately the men chosen by Sinn Fein for this work were persons who appeared determined to do everything to irritate and annoy the officers with whom they were in touch, losing no opportunity of posing to the public as the ruling power in the

country. When complaints were brought to their notice, supported by reliable evidence, they dismissed them as devoid of any semblance of foundation without making an effort to ascertain the truth on their side.

Another difficulty with these Sinn Fein liaison officials was that they used letter-paper headed : "Irish Republican Army," and after their signatures added an Army rank, generally that of General. I passed the word to the Divisional Generals that neither the I.R.A. nor any military rank could be recognized by us, because if the peace negotiations broke down the Irish would at once argue that we had recognized their Army status and claim to be treated as belligerents. In the same way care had to be taken never to refer to de Valera as "the President," but merely as "the representative of the majority in Southern Ireland", and, indeed, to avoid any term which could in the future be construed into a recognition either of the Republic or of the Irish Republican Army.

That this caution was not unnecessary was evident when a well-informed writer like Stephen Gwynn wrote to *The Observer* that "the status of the Republican officers is now fully admitted by the British military authority, and large consequences in logic flow from that," a false impression which I took steps at once to correct. As time went on it was claimed by Sinn Fein that Ulster was included in the terms of the truce, an absurd insinuation, but in keeping with the vanity and native inaccuracy of the Southern Irish.

So difficult did the liaison business become, owing mainly to the selection by Sinn Fein of persons with whom it was impossible, even with the best of goodwill, to deal that it soon broke down so far as the Army was concerned, and communications were carried on through the civil authorities at the Castle.

One incident not without its funny side took place in my house. At Cork, where General Strickland was having a most difficult

time, a shock-headed youth, who had been one of the most active of the gunmen, was appointed as liaison official. This youth, Barry, had enlisted in the British Army during the war, serving in the artillery, and was promoted to bombardier but afterwards reduced for misconduct. He was very tenacious of his rank in the I.R.A., of which, under my orders, no notice was taken, and finally behaved in such an overbearing and insulting manner that Strickland very properly refused to see him. He then rushed up to Dublin, saying he was going to London to see de Valera, and so on. Duggan, the Sinn Fein official with whom I was in touch, brought him round to the Royal Hospital, and when I saw him I quite sympathized with Strickland's difficulties. While this man and Duggan were in my room, a conversation was overheard between the butler and an old pensioner who for long had been employed as doorkeeper in charge of the visitors' book. Said the butler: "Well, Mr. Kennedy, you may have been here for twenty-six years, but you've never opened the door to a thing like that before!" And I don't suppose he ever had!

The Sinn Fein liaison people were known among ourselves as the "a charas," from an Erse expression with which they commenced their letters, and which was the sum total of the knowledge of the Erse language possessed by all but a very few of them. Later on this man Barry was replaced as liaison official at Cork by a man who had planned and carried out the attempt on Strickland's life, an appointment that could hardly be expected, one would think even by Sinn Fein, to help towards a good understanding.

The everyday violation of the truce terms by de Valera's followers was a constant source of trouble and anxiety up to the signing of the treaty in the following December, and though he agreed with the Government that seventy-two hours' notice on both sides was to be given before operations on either side

recommenced, I realized that his gunmen would not consider themselves bound by any such undertaking on his part, and that outrages would recommence simultaneously with the rupture of negotiations.

The conference in London began on 14th July, and under various aspects dragged on, wearing through the autumn, till the signing of the treaty on 6th December, a period which was almost more trying to the police and troops than when active operations were in progress.

No sooner was a semblance of calm established in the South than trouble broke out in Belfast, due to the approaching celebrations of 12th July. Fifteen persons were killed, eighty-four wounded, including a district inspector of the R.I.C. and a Labour-Unionist member of the Ulster Parliament, and over 120 houses more or less damaged. No doubt the tension which occurs in Belfast towards the 12th July had been aggravated by Sinn Fein gunmen sniping from house-tops and street-corners, a very little of which was sufficient to start the militant Orange gunmen into activity.

In order to prevent the trouble spreading a battalion was at once sent up to strengthen the force under Colonel Carter-Campbell, who was then commanding the troops in Belfast. While there is no doubt that outbreaks of violence in Belfast, and in other parts of Ulster, from this time onwards were mainly encouraged and fomented by the I.R.A. leaders in Dublin, the Orange gang was by no means exempt from the responsibility of starting some of the pogroms, and when once firing had begun it was almost impossible to discover who had fired the first shot. These outbreaks were spasmodic until Sir James Craig put his foot down and interned everybody suspected of being a disturber of the peace, and against whom there was no evidence to bring before a court of law, a condition of affairs only too common throughout Ireland.

Mercifully many of my staff were blessed with a sense of humour, and we were not slow to seize upon the comic touches that now and again glinted through an atmosphere of "alarms and excursions." On the 13th July we were moved to mirth by an incident which in any country but Ireland could hardly have found place except as the plot of a comic opera. The Southern Parliament was solemnly opened at the Castle, Sir John Anderson officiating as a kind of official Poo-Bah, the function being attended by twelve Senators and four members of the Lower House. Surely the British Government might have saved the sixteen worthy gentlemen from exhibiting themselves under such ludicrous conditions. It was rumoured that a Speaker had been elected, but from that day the Parliament disappeared from public view.

From the day of the truce no time was lost in perfecting military arrangements in case the negotiations broke down, and the Government found itself obliged to carry out its half-expressed intention of proclaiming martial law throughout the twenty-six counties, and carrying through a policy of coercion until rebellion was stamped out.

Unfortunately the Chief Secretary, either from reasons of economy or from a desire to placate Sinn Fein, had practically broken up the Police Secret Service very shortly after the truce, a step which would have resulted in much unnecessary loss of life had activities recommenced.

On the 16th July orders were received to release Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald, who had been the Sinn Fein Director of Propaganda, from internment, and from that date by degrees all rebels who had been elected to the Dail were set free. One of the most notable was John McKeown, generally known as the Blacksmith of Ballinasloe. He had been found guilty of killing a police officer who tried to arrest him, and been sentenced to death. While on the way to Dublin he had endeavoured to

escape, received a bullet through his shoulder from one of the escort, and for some time was in King George V Military Hospital at Dublin, where I had several chats with him. As a rule the rebels one saw in hospital were unwilling to enter into conversation and of a fanatical, bitter cast of countenance, but McKeown was always cheery, and seemed to take his fate as part of the day's work. A great deal was made in Sinn Fein propaganda of an occasion when he prevented his men from murdering some police who had been captured. Certainly he struck me as a more cheery individual than most of his fellows, and the possessor of a sense of humour of which all those I came across, with the exception of Michael Collins, had not an apparent spark.

Among those who on account of the truce escaped the extreme punishment, McKeown was to my mind the most deserving. At a later period—to be exact, on 5th August, 1921—I heard from Cope that de Valera had applied for the release of all the remaining members of the Dail who were interned, a goodly company of desperate gunmen. For some inscrutable reason McKeown alone was debarred from this amnesty by the authorities in London. Late one evening Cope rushed round to tell me that Barton had told him that unless McKeown was released the Sinn Fein representatives would not go to London to confer with Mr. Lloyd George, and asked my advice. I told Cope that McKeown's release was a matter of political rather than of military expediency, and sent him off to see the Lord-Lieutenant, who was in Dublin at the time.

The next day I was asked officially from London what my views were, and replied, as I had already told Cope, that if it was considered desirable from a political point of view to release McKeown I should raise no objection, and that I regarded Michael Collins, Burgess, and de Valera as being far more implicated in the orgy of murder of the last two years than

McKeown. He was accordingly released, and later proved a staunch unholder of the Free State. Towards the end of July I took the opportunity of making a tour of inspection in Galway, and a few days after my return found myself involved with a class of Irish officials with whom up to that time I had remained officially on friendly terms! The incident, which will probably be quoted down the ages to be whenever martial and civil law come into conflict, is worth describing in some detail. Martial law was proclaimed over certain counties in the South of Ireland in December, 1920, and in January, 1921. I have already pointed out\* that under the conditions that prevailed the administration was perforce of a mild and modified form.

Of the twenty-three cases (a total of thirty-seven individuals) in which death sentences were passed, five appeals were made to the courts with the following results :—

Case of ALLEN. The King's Bench decided :

- (1) A state of war existed.
- (2) During the continuance of such a state of war the Government is entitled, and indeed bound, to repel force by force, and thereby put down the insurrection and restore public order.
- (3) Military courts could act though the ordinary courts were sitting.
- (4) Civil courts could not control the military authorities *durante bello*.

Writs of prohibition and habeas corpus were refused.

Case of GARDE and others. The King's Bench decided :

- (1) A state of war still existed.

Writs of habeas corpus were refused.

Cases of RONAYNE and MULCAHY. The King's Bench decided :

- (1) A state of things existed which justified the execution of

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\* See pages 504 to 506

martial law, and, as that was proved to the satisfaction of the court, the hands of the judges were tied and they could not interfere.

Writs of habeas corpus were refused.

Cases of CLIFFORD and O'SULLIVAN :

An application to Mr. Justice Powell for a writ of prohibition was refused by the judge, who felt himself bound by the decision of the King's Bench in the case of Allen, and the Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal holding that it was "a criminal cause or matter," and that an appeal did not lie. On an appeal to the House of Lords it was held that the appellants had a right of appeal, but that the appeal should be dismissed as there was no jurisdiction to order a writ of prohibition to issue to a military court. Clifford and O'Sullivan then instituted proceedings in the Irish Chancery Courts for a writ of habeas corpus, but owing to the truce the case was not fought, the military undertaking not to carry the sentences into effect during the continuance of the truce.

Finally came the cases of EGAN and HIGGINS, who had been sentenced to death by military courts-martial in the martial law area prior to the truce, under conditions precisely similar to those in the case of Allen and others, for whom writs of habeas corpus had been refused by the King's Bench. The application for writs of habeas corpus came before the Right Hon. C. A. O'Connor, the Master of Rolls in Ireland, who on 26th July, 1921, made absolute an order for a writ of habeas corpus, declining to follow the unanimous decision of the King's Bench in identical cases, and making the writs returnable for 29th July. Incidentally, in making the orders returnable for that date the provisions of Statutes 21 and 22 George III appear to have been ignored by the Master of the Rolls, the prisoners being at the time in the Limerick and Cork Gaols respectively.

This ruling of the Master of the Rolls caused a terrific stir



in Sinn Fein circles, being described as "a staggering blow" against military rule. So far as I was concerned I considered that the position of the military was unassailable, and had no intention of paying attention to the writ, instructions to that effect being telegraphed to General Strickland, who, together with Colonel Cameron, commanding the Brigade at Limerick, and the governors of the Cork and Limerick Prisons, had been included in the writs. On 28th July, the day before the writs were returnable, counsel for the Crown appeared before the Master of the Rolls and told him that the military authorities did not propose to produce the two men, Egan and Higgins, or, having regard to the decision in the House of Lords in the cases of Clifford and O'Sullivan, to release Egan and Higgins pending the hearing of the final appeal in former cases. This fairly enraged the Master of the Rolls, who burst forth in a tirade to the effect that "This is a deliberate contempt of court. It is unprecedented in the history of this court, and in the whole history of British law. Let a writ of attachment be issued against the several parties to whom the writ is addressed," and so on. It must have then occurred to him that the continued existence of his court at all was due to the presence of the British troops, and that perhaps there might be difficulties in arresting myself and my subordinates, for he went on to say: "I don't know whether it is intended to resist the writ of the court by force of arms. If that is the case, we have come to the days of red ruin and the breaking-up of laws," and a good deal more in the same sense.

This was a perfect godsend for the press, and the next day the headlines were a joy to read:—

DELIBERATE CONTEMPT

MILITARIST ANARCHISM

WRIT AGAINST MACREADY

JUDGE'S ANGER AT CONTEMPT

DAYS OF RED RUIN

WILL GENERAL MACREADY GO TO MOUNTJOY GAOL?

Judging by a paragraph in a Dublin paper the one person who seemed rather unhappy over the whole affair was the High Sheriff, who, when questioned by a reporter as to whether he would execute the writ, had evidently come to a conclusion that it was for the police rather than for him to carry out the order of the court.

The whole affair, apart from the amusement it caused, tempered with irritation among many officers who looked upon the action of the Master of the Rolls as a studied and unnecessary insult to their General, was unfortunate in that it increased the already too overbearing attitude of the rebels, and gratuitously raised the whole question of the powers of the military under martial law. In the preceding April I had drawn the attention of the Chief Secretary to this very danger, but failed to extract any reply from him.

Unfortunately, on the 28th July, the day on which the writs of attachment were to be issued, I was in London attending a Selection Board at the War Office. On receiving the news I telegraphed over instructions on no account to release the two men, and to pay no attention to the writ. I afterwards discovered that directions to the same effect had been telegraphed from the Irish Office to the Castle. In order to prevent the situation becoming more absurd I determined, in the event of the matter not being satisfactorily settled by the Government from the standpoint of the Army, to go to Cork on my return to Ireland, and from there carry out some inspections. In the martial law area I should not have hesitated to arrest anyone, including the Master of the Rolls himself, who attempted to carry out the service of the writs.

In the meantime Sir John Anderson had been busy in Dublin. Without referring to the military authorities, who at that time had the advantage of numbering among the Staff several barristers, including one K.C., all men who were capable of giving

sound advice on the relations of civil versus martial law, he discussed the situation with Sir John Ross, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who deprecated, perhaps naturally, any apparent flouting of the authority of his colleague, the Master of the Rolls, and advocated the release of the prisoners without prejudice.

It so happened that none of the Law officers of the Crown were in London during that week-end, and the Prime Minister assented to the release of the two men as the best way of solving the difficulty, and partly, as I gathered later, out of consideration for me, thinking it would save me from an awkward situation. We laughed over it afterwards when I assured him that there was never the least fear that either myself or any of those included in the writs would have been in any way incommoded by the Master of the Rolls' fulminations. I knew nothing of this decision to release the two men until after it had taken effect. Had I done so I should certainly have protested against it, until such time as the Lord High Chancellor and the Law officers of the Crown had considered it. But from the broad point of view of the Army the matter was serious, and as soon as I heard that the two men had been released I wrote to the Army Council recapitulating the incidents of the case, and while agreeing that possibly the solution that had been arrived at was politically expedient, the military standpoint could not be ignored. I pointed out that "from the point of view of a soldier upon whom such great responsibility may at any time be cast, and who has to exercise his discretion in dealing daily with the lives of men, the position in which he can be called to account by any judge, however distinguished and politically unbiased, makes the administration of martial law impossible, and if I may be permitted to use the expression, ridiculous—a fact which perhaps can only be fully realized by those who are carrying out the work on the spot."

I went on to say that if the retention of my position

as Commander-in-Chief was of any advantage to the Government I had no desire to complicate an already delicate situation, but that unless my authority as Chief Governor of the martial law area was not speedily restored I must ask to be relieved of a position I could no longer hold without loss of self-respect. On 1st August the whole matter was investigated by a Sub-Committee of the Cabinet, and as a result a statement was made in the House of Commons which was embodied in the following order to the troops in Ireland so as to clear up any doubts that might exist in the minds of soldiers charged with the administration of martial law in the future :—

## SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

by

GEN. RT. HON. SIR C. F. N. MACREADY, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

General Headquarters, Ireland,

Parkgate, Dublin, Monday, August 15th, 1921.

On the 26th July, the Master of the Rolls, Ireland, delivered judgment and issued a writ of habeas corpus in the case of two men under sentence of death in the martial law area.

The military authorities, in pursuance of the well-known principle that in an area where martial law applies writs of habeas corpus do not run, refused to comply with the writ. On this the Master of the Rolls directed writs of attachment to be issued against the Commander-in-Chief, the Military Governor of the martial law area, and other officers.

Subsequently, by order of the Government, the two men under sentence of death were released.

On the 10th August the matter was raised in the House of Commons, and the Lord Privy Seal, answering for the Government, stated that :

“ This action in releasing the two men was based solely upon the existing situation in Ireland, and the importance at the present time of avoiding conflict between the civil and military authorities. The releases were not due to any decision given by the civil court in Ireland; civil courts have no power to overrule the decisions of military courts in the martial law area in Ireland. The decision of the military officer administering martial law in Ireland will be upheld.”

In view of the prominence given in the press to the above cases, and in order that officers both now and hereafter who are, or may be, called upon to administer martial law may know their power in regard to interference by civil courts, the Commander-in-Chief wishes the above facts to be made known throughout the command.

The action of the Master of the Rolls in Ireland in these cases caused considerable comment at the time, not only because it was in direct opposition to the rulings of every other judge on the Irish Bench by whom similar cases had been heard, but because the cases of Egan and Higgins should in the ordinary course have fallen to the Vacation Judge who was sitting at the time ; nor was the Master of the Rolls correct in his historical reference that the military action in these cases was "unprecedented in the whole history of British law." On 10th November, 1798, when Lord Cornwallis was Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, Wolfe Tone was tried by a court-martial in Dublin under the presidency of General Loftus, martial law being in force at the time, and was condemned to death.

The following extract from Volume 27 "State Trials" is of interest in view of what occurred 123 years later :—

In the interval a motion was made in the Court of King's Bench by Mr. Curran\*, on an affidavit of Mr. Tone's father, stating that his son had been brought before a bench of officers calling itself a court-martial, and by them sentenced to death.

MR. CURRAN: I stand upon this sacred and immutable principle that martial and civil law are incompatible, and that the former must cease with the existence of the latter. This is not the time for deciding this momentous question. My client must appear in this court. He is cast for death this day. He may be ordered for execution while I address you. I call on the court to support the law. I move for a habeas corpus to be directed to the Provost-Marshal of the Barracks of Dublin, and Major Sandys to bring up the body of Mr. Tone.

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\* John Philpot Curran, K.C. (1750-1817), M.P. for Kilbeggan, West Meath. Defended Wolfe Tone, Napper Tandy and other Irish rebels in 1798. Master of the Rolls (Ireland).

The LORD CHIEF JUSTICE (Lord Kilwarden): Have a writ instantly prepared.

Mr. CURRAN: My client may die while this writ is preparing.

The LORD CHIEF JUSTICE: Mr. Sheriff, proceed to the barracks and acquaint the Provost-Marshal that a writ is preparing to suspend Mr. Tone's execution, and see that he is not executed.

(The court awaited in a state of the utmost agitation the return of the Sheriff.)

Mr. SHERIFF: My lords, I have been to the barracks in pursuance of your order. The Provost-Marshal says he must obey Major Sandys; Major Sandys says he must obey Lord Cornwallis.

Mr. CURRAN: Mr. Tone's father, my lords, returns after serving the habeas corpus; he says General Craig will not obey it.

The LORD CHIEF JUSTICE: Mr. Sheriff, take the body of Tone into your custody. Take the Provost-Marshal and Major Sandys into custody, and show the order of the court to General Craig.

Mr. SHERIFF (after having been refused admission to the barracks): I have been at the barracks. Mr. Tone having cut his throat last night is not in a condition to be removed. As to the second part of your order, I could not meet the parties.

The LORD CHIEF JUSTICE: Let a rule be made for suspending the execution of Theobald Wolfe Tone, and let it be served on the proper authorities.

Owing to Tone's death the matter went no further. Lord Cornwallis was at the time in the West of Ireland, where General Humbert, with a French force, had endeavoured to support the Irish rebels of those days, and had Tone not committed suicide presumably the orders of the Commander-in-Chief would have been carried out.

The breeze between the Master of the Rolls and myself made no difference in our personal relations, which remained cordial up to the day on which I left Ireland, though I could not refrain from occasionally poking some fun at him at the monthly meetings of the Royal Hibernian School Board, of which we were both members.

The pronouncement of the Government on the advice of the highest legal authority of the Crown in this case was so

unequivocal as to safeguard the position of officers charged in the future with the burden of administering martial law, and on that account alone was an ample compensation for the absurd position in which I and my officers had been placed. The Master of the Rolls too, no doubt, "acquired merit," as Kipling would have put it, with *Sinn Fein*, and so the incident ended.

As soon as the members of the Dail had been released from the internment camps activities were increased by the remaining rebels either to effect their escape or to procure their release under one pretext or another. The digging of tunnels had always been a favourite amusement for the internees in the intervals of listening to lectures by their leaders, learning Erse, a not very popular pastime, or destroying the sanitary arrangements provided for their benefit. Occasionally men got away in this way, though not very often, but the excuses put forward to secure release, generally founded on family bereavements, reminded me of the words of a once popular Indian song :—

Now, your father, as you know, went and died a year ago,  
While of aunts you must have killed at least a score;  
Though of mothers only one up to date to death you've done,  
I am sure that soon you'll kill a dozen more.

The sympathetic anxiety towards their interests displayed by Cope and the other Castle officials made it incumbent on the military to investigate as closely as possible the heartrending Hibernian fictions that flowed in from the camps. One typical instance will suffice :—

A man sent in an urgent appeal, strongly backed by the Castle people, and reinforced by a telegram to Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., for immediate release on the plea that his wife was at the point of death. Happily the lady lived in London, so I rang up my old friend the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, and asked him to send an officer round to the lady's address. Within a couple of hours a reply came through that the lady had slightly

sprained her ankle and was attending as an out-patient at St. George's Hospital. Possibly such a slight mishap was equivalent to approaching dissolution in the fervent imagination of the husband, who, however, had further leisure to ponder over the latest insult to Old Ireland.

Before the truce had been in operation for a fortnight the situation became so black that it looked as if at any moment military activities would be renewed, de Valera on 16th August in the Dail giving a point-blank refusal to the offer of the Government. The same evening I telegraphed instructions to all Divisions to be ready to put all protective and defensive measures in force at a moment's notice.

Although I could extract no decision on my proposals for the employment of troops and police in the event of the breaking of the truce, an omission which made it impossible to complete all arrangements, the Government seemed to be determined to take a firm line if the worst came to the worst, and I received a hint that a little rattling of the sabre would have a good effect on the situation, to which effect was given by recalling all officers and fifty per cent. of the men from leave. This period between the truce and the treaty was almost as trying to the troops as the pre-truce days. The police, under the handling of Cope, began to drop out of the picture, many of the English recruits being sent out of the country on leave, and those of the R.I.C. who remained being practically forbidden to exercise their authority for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of the rebels. The troops were kept occupied as much as possible in training, and did not in the ordinary course come into contact with the populace to the same extent as the police, but the position both of police and soldiers was humiliating in the extreme. Rebels who for long had been "on the run," or in hiding in the mountains, reappeared, often in I.R.A. uniform, and flaunted the police and soldiers before whom a few days previously they would have fled for their lives.



The general tone of the press and of public utterances implied that de Valera had demanded the cessation of activity, and that this having been conceded he, as leader of the I.R.A., agreed to refrain from warlike action. Nor were instances lacking in which the achievements of the I.R.A. were lauded as having vanquished the Crown forces when the very reverse was the case. There is no doubt that the strongest factor which induced de Valera to enter into conversations with the Government was the knowledge that his gunmen were rapidly being worn down and dispersed.

While it is true that the tale of individual murders of unarmed soldiers, policemen and civilians was still heavy at the date of the truce, the rebel organization, thanks to the steady pressure of the police and troops, and in spite of withdrawals on account of labour trouble in England, was in a precarious condition. Flying columns of rebels were being chased from pillar to post, suffering heavily whenever they were overtaken by the Crown forces. The internment camps were filled to overflowing. The headquarters of the I.R.A. found great difficulty in functioning at all, their offices being constantly discovered and raided, while de Valera himself had been captured and only released for political reasons.

At the moment of the truce large reinforcements of troops had arrived, and others were on their way, while it was an open secret that the Government were on the point of declaring martial law throughout the whole of the twenty-six counties, a state of affairs which would have made life even more unpleasant for the rebels.

These were the conditions when de Valera agreed to open conversations in London, conditions which later on were discovered to have been in fact very much more unfavourable to the rebels than was realized even by me at the time. When in December, 1921, an attempt was made in Dail Eireann by opponents of the treaty to belaud the achievements of the I.R.A., Richard Mulcahy, the Chief of the I.R.A. Staff, disposed of it by a curt remark that

not only had they failed to drive the British into the sea but that their sole achievements were the destruction of a few police barracks.

The patience and control of the police and troops in this atmosphere of studied provocation was in all respects admirable, but was little realized, and I fear hardly appreciated, on the other side of the Irish Channel. I have before mentioned that on 8th July, when agreeing to terms of truce with de Valera, I had done so under the impression that matters would in a short time be placed upon an established basis by the Government and had drawn attention to this at the time. When the truce had been in operation for about a month it became imperative, on account of the constant breaches of the agreement by the rebels, that some steps should be taken to substitute carefully considered conditions for the rough-and-ready terms of the original truce. I submitted to the Government a list of recommendations based on the experience of the rebel activities since the truce, but nothing was done in the matter until the following October, when a conference took place in London to which reference will be made later.

Just about this time the American Consul-General, Mr. Dumont, left Ireland on transfer to another post. The departure of this gentleman and his wife was a real loss, not alone on account of their charming personalities, but of the determined stand which Mr. Dumont took up against the lying propaganda served up by Sinn Fein to his own countrymen.

The month of August ended up with an outbreak of shooting in Belfast, which was started by the throwing of a bomb by Orangemen into the Catholic quarter, and went on into the first days of September. It was the old story of Catholics versus Protestants; the Catholic shipyard workers on this occasion being unable to get to their work on 1st September, the I.R.A. publicly announced in Dublin that they would undertake the defence of the Belfast Catholics, a move that certainly did not make for peace,

as under the orders, presumably, of one O'Duffy—or "Lead the lead" O'Duffy, as he was nicknamed—who appeared to direct I.R.A. activities in Belfast, snipers were established in houses to shoot at anybody who might be coming along. An estimate of the casualties during street-fighting in Belfast for thirteen months ending in August, 1921, totalled 120 killed and 400 wounded—a foolish waste of life. Truly of Belfast it may be said that religion brings not peace but a sword, or its more modern equivalent.

The rebels also kidnapped a couple of the R.I.C. in the South, and my particular "a chara," Mr. Duggan, seemed quite helpless to obtain their release.

On 2nd September I received a wire to go at once to see Mr. Lloyd George at Gairloch, in the Western Highlands, where he was resting with his family, the Greenwoods, Lord Riddell, and one or two others. The situation with de Valera was at the moment acute, that Iberian Irishman having decided that his rejection of the British proposals was irrevocable. I had a very pleasant trip, enjoying a part of Scotland I had never seen before, but, apart from that, have a shrewd suspicion that the only object of my presence was to create an impression that big things were in preparation if de Valera broke off negotiations.

From several talks with Mr. Lloyd George it was evident that he was very much at sea about the military situation in Ireland or the methods of the troops, and, rather to my astonishment, started finding fault with two of the Divisional Commanders who, in my opinion, were the best men who could be found for the work. So little did he know of the kind of work that fell upon the troops and police that he was under the impression that the actual operations could be commanded by senior officers flying about the country. I gave him a vivid picture of the actual work in which, once a combined operation was worked out and planned by a General or other senior officer, the action of necessity fell upon junior officers,

who had to use their wits if and when they came in contact with bands of rebels.

From remarks let drop by the Prime Minister I had little doubt that Mr. Winston Churchill had been impressing him with his ideas of how the military operations should be conducted in order to bring about a quick finish. I can only say that certain suggestions which were let drop would not, I think, have been taken up by any Commander-in-Chief who had the welfare of the Army at heart. In the end the Prime Minister wanted to see some officers who had been in actual contact with the rebels under arms, as distinct from those who daily passed a hundred armed civilians who would shoot if they could do so in safety.

A few days later the whole party motored to Inverness, some of us going on to Brahan Castle, Lord Seaforth's seat, which had been placed at Mr. Lloyd George's disposal. Having practically nothing to do I had ample time to enjoy the scenery and the contents of the Castle, which were full of interest, apart from the building itself, which had been the headquarters of Marshal Wade for some seven years when he was engaged in pacifying the Highlands after the Jacobite rising in 1715.

On 7th September a Cabinet meeting was held in the Town Hall at Inverness, after which everybody rushed back to Brahan for a discussion on the state of Ireland with the officers whom I had telegraphed for and some police who had been collected by the Chief Secretary. It was a pleasant trip for these people, some expense to the State, and as a result the Prime Minister and those members of the Cabinet who were present merely heard what had been told them before, the whole crux of the situation being more men and a definite and sustained policy.

The remarks of the officers who had been sent for were, to say the least, amusing when the meeting broke up, for, judging by the questions put to them, they were not prepared for such a display of ignorance on the part of those in whose hands the

destinies of Ireland lay. It reminded me of another occasion when several senior officers were haled to Downing Street, their first experience of the inner circle of Government, and one of them on coming out turned to me and said : "Good Lord, do you mean to say that those men govern the country?" After all, no man can master the detail of every fraction of the Government machine, but harm is often caused by credence being given to the theories of amateurs rather than to the considered opinions of men on the spot.

On 9th September I was back again in Dublin, to find the usual effervescence in full blast. Trouble threatened in the North, Cope was agitated in case de Valera should refuse to continue his conversations with the Prime Minister, and even Mrs. Childers, one of the stormiest of Sinn Fein stormy petrels, was attempting to influence the press to get de Valera out of his difficulty, while all the time violations of the truce conditions by the rebels were of almost daily occurrence for which no satisfaction could be obtained from the "a cháras."

Towards the end of September the question of the police forces in Ulster became involved, mainly owing to the action of some Castle official in forbidding the use of the Special Constabulary after the date of the truce. Ulster was not concerned in the terms of the truce, no representative of Northern Ireland having been present at the conference. The Special Constabulary previous to the truce had been working with the R.I.C. with more or less satisfactory results, and it was only natural that as soon as outrages again became prevalent in Belfast the Ulster Government should desire to re-employ their Specials. But as they had under orders from Dublin been withdrawn from duty Sinn Fein might claim that their reappearance was a breach of the truce.

A proposal that the Specials should work independently of the R.I.C. I was obliged to resist for fear that the troops, if called

in, might find themselves involved with the Specials as well as with Sinn Fein. A memorandum from the office of the Police Adviser did not help to unravel the tangle because it was based on the assumption that Sinn Fein were invariably the aggressors, which was by no means the case. In the end Sir John Anderson asked me to authorize Colonel Carter-Campbell, commanding the troops in Belfast, to act as sole police authority in that city. I did so, at the same time impressing on Campbell that the Special Constabulary were to work only under the direction of the R.I.C. officers, who were to be held responsible for their actions. The whole business gave a lot of unnecessary trouble, and was solely due to the unconsidered zeal of the Chief Secretary's Staff at the moment of the truce to throw everything to the winds that might in any way hurt the feelings of the rebels.

The difference in the Irish situation at this time as viewed through civil or military spectacles is fairly set out in a letter I wrote to Sir Hamar Greenwood on 30th September, 1921, which may be usefully quoted. It must be remembered that Sir Hamar had not been in Ireland for some months, and was dependent for his information mainly on his subordinates at the Castle.

"I have just seen a copy of your weekly survey, dated 24th September, and I cannot help thinking that the first paragraph is not only optimistic but is by no means a statement of fact. Whether the police reports are coloured by a desire to please those in authority at the Castle, or not, I do not know, but I do know that the observance of the truce conditions is becoming worse every week, and the latter part of your survey gives, if I might venture to say so, a much truer account than the first paragraph, which to my mind is misleading.

How the police can report a marked improvement in the observance of the truce conditions in view of the fact that drilling and rifle practice are openly increasing, I am at a loss to understand, unless they consider that this is not a breach of the truce. I see that there was a disturbance between the police and civilians in Limerick the other day, and though I have no particulars at the moment, I

have no doubt that it was because the police were endeavouring to enforce the conditions of the truce.

Further, the requisitioning of houses has been very much on the increase, and in my opinion the situation can be only correctly summed up by saying that Sinn Fein have thrown all conditions of the truce to the winds, and outbreaks are merely avoided on account of the supine action of the police, due no doubt to instructions they have received from the Castle."

On 12th October, 1921, I attended a meeting at Whitehall Gardens for the purpose of improving the unsatisfactory interpretation by the rebels of the conditions of the truce, to which I had drawn attention in August, and the placing of them on a more assured basis. On the side of the Government were Sir Laming Worthington Evans, Sir Hamar Greenwood, Tudor, Anderson, Cope and myself, the Sinn Fein representatives being Michael Collins, Duggan, and Barton. As it was the first time I had come face to face with Collins I naturally was interested in a man who was in fact the principal figure in the rebellion. Up to the time of his death we met several times in order to transact necessary business, and I endeavoured to form a fair estimate of his character.

It was by no means pleasant to be obliged in the course of duty to associate with men whose methods, apart from their devotion to their cause, can only be characterized as murder and assassination by those who hold that even the art of slaying one's fellow-creatures should be marked by some adherence to the chivalry of bygone days. This feeling is, I think, common to all professional soldiers, though it evidently was considered superfluous by many politicians and by certain sections of the press, judging by the flood of adulation poured on the Sinn Fein delegates at the time. So long as I held my official position I endeavoured in my dealings with the representatives of Sinn Fein to sink my personal feelings in order to advance to the best of my ability the policy laid down by the Government. Among the

various Sinn Feiners with whom from time to time I came in touch, Michael Collins struck me as being the easiest to deal with. Of a type common in Ireland, his like can be seen by the score on any Irish racecourse, but he had, what few of his countrymen possess, a sense of humour, and, above all, the gift during a conversation of sticking to essentials. On several occasions, after the creation of the Provisional Government, during discussions with him and his colleagues, he would call one of his friends who had wandered into realms quite foreign to the matter under discussion to order, and complete the business with the least possible waste of time.

Tall, dark, strongly though loosely built, with an apparent indifference to personal appearance, he undoubtedly was able to impose his will upon those by whom he was surrounded, a power strengthened by the knowledge of the fate that might overtake those who stood in his path. He exhibited the Irish characteristics in a marked degree, being, when occasion offered, a *bon vivant*, an admirer of the other sex, and from all accounts a cheery companion when free from the cares of office. Fearless he certainly was, to which he added a degree of cunning which stood him in good stead in many a tight corner. A large measure of his popularity was due to the stories of hair-breadth escapes which, however, lost nothing in the telling, and were due in more than one instance to treachery or fear on the part of agents employed by the Crown. No plea of patriotism can cleanse his memory from the stain of having been the directing spirit of a policy of cold-blooded assassination for which it is hard to find a counterpart in the history of the world. At the same time there is no record, so far as I am aware, that he carried out any murders with his own hand.

To return to the meeting at Whitehall Gardens. It sat for two days, most of the time being spent in searching for that political panacea for all ills, "a form of words," and in the end no useful results were produced.



Although an agreement was made by the Government which lasted up to the treaty of 6th December, 1921, it was eminently unsatisfactory, but was loyally endured by the Crown forces, the liaison arrangements gradually drifting into the hands of the civil officials at the Castle, whose sympathies towards Irish aspirations enabled them to discover roundabout ways for dealing with situations in which the "Sinners" either denied clearly proved facts, or took refuge in the course which proved so fatal to Ananias.

The Government, in giving way to Sinn Féin on the question of drilling and recruiting the I.R.A., were doubtless actuated by a fixed determination to find or force a peaceful solution of the Irish tangle, but had negotiations broken down a heavy toll of lives would have been the price of such forbearance. It was a risky step to take, and added considerably to the anxiety of those who were endeavouring to keep the flag flying in Ireland. The day following this conference I found myself once more an unwilling source of joy to my friends. An Irish paper, hearing that Michael Collins and I had met at a conference, plastered Dublin, and to a lesser degree, London with nine-inch-lettered posters :—

MICK

AND

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I ran into one on my way down Whitehall to see the Prime Minister, and told him, not too seriously, that I had indeed sunk to the lowest depths of degradation in my efforts to serve him and his Government! Although the Irish as a race are devoid of humour, it is essential to the peace of mind of anyone who has dealings with them.

In consequence of the new truce conditions I issued orders to concentrate the troops and to draw in small detachments, the same policy being pursued by the police. With the daily recruitment and drilling of the I.R.A. I was not prepared to risk the locking-up, and consequent relief, of small bodies of troops if hostilities

suddenly recommenced. On the other hand if the Government came to terms with de Valera the partial concentration would facilitate evacuation.

In my position as Commander-in-Chief the situation in Ireland during the months of October and November, 1921, was more anxious than during any period of my command. Under the conditions of the truce all sources of Intelligence were closed, the rebels on the other hand were increasing their numbers, armament, and efficiency. So sharp was the watch they kept on Army activities that Michael Collins during October had the impertinence to lodge a complaint to the Government in reference to a routine circular that had been issued from G.H.Q. on the subject of the training of the troops, which he claimed to be an incitement to break the truce. The strength of the garrison was rapidly decreasing owing to the despatch of the autumn drafts to India, and the Army Council failed to extract authority from the Government to raise a sufficiency of men to enable me in case of need to assume the initiative and strike without delay. Every now and again a special messenger, or a telegram, came from London with the news that negotiations were in the balance and might break down at any moment, especially about the time de Valera sent his bombastic telegram to the Pope.

In September I had submitted certain proposals in the event of negotiations breaking down, proposals which were concurred in by Henry Wilson as C.I.G.S., but for which no approval could be obtained from the Secretary of State.

One thing was very evident, that the wise men sitting in Downing Street, who had never set foot in Ireland, had no conception of what would happen in that country from the moment when de Valera might pass the word to his gunmen that negotiations had broken down. With a little imagination the lesson of the outrages that took place during the sixty-four hours between de Valera's agreement to a cessation of activities on 8th July and

the hour at which the truce came into operation should have indicated that the dangers were very real, and no phantom of the military mind.

The replacement about this time of Cope, who was wanted in London, by Sir Mark Sturgis helped to ease the situation with the "a charas" considerably, Sturgis's level-headed common sense being proof against the threats and blandishments of de Valera's followers to which Cope had generally fallen an easy prey owing to his superanxiety to further a peaceful solution, a point on which most of us were agreed, but within limitations.

During November I took the opportunity of motoring down to Cork to inspect the troops on the way there and back, my former visits to that hotbed of rebellion having previously been made by sea, and on the way back had the pleasure of seeing the 2nd battalion of my old regiment, who were looking after the internees in Maryborough prison. All the troops I saw during this trip were in the pink of condition, practically no sickness among them, but naturally anxious either to get back to peace conditions in Great Britain or to start on again at the rebels.

On my return to Dublin on 16th November I found that the storm centre had shifted to Ulster. For some time past Sinn Fein agents had been stirring up trouble and the Ulstermen, especially the Orange mob of Belfast, were only too ready to accept the challenge, with the result that bomb-throwing, shooting, and burnings went steadily on during the greater part of November. Colonel Carter-Campbell, who had been obliged to relinquish his command in Belfast owing to ill-health, had been replaced by Major-General A. Cameron, who had already gained considerable experience of the Southern Irish during his command of the brigade at Limerick. A Highlander born and bred, with a keen if quiet sense of humour, his patience, tact, and firmness, coupled with a profound insight into the temperamental peculiarities of the "Black North," to use Henry Wilson's

expression, enabled him to hold the balance between the warring factions during the stormy days before Sir James Craig succeeded in establishing order in the six counties.

From the early autumn the military aspect of Ulster had been a subject of considerable discussion between Henry Wilson and myself. Various schemes had been put forward both in regard to the military command and to the provision and organization of a Special Constabulary, or some such force. The difficulties were considerable, because the Royal Irish Constabulary, under the Act of 1920, was an Imperial service for the whole of Ireland, and could therefore not be split up into two parts for Northern and Southern Ireland. Further, it was impossible to say from day to day whether martial law might not be proclaimed over the whole of Ireland, or only over the twenty-six Southern counties.

The truce of 8th July, though in no way applicable to Ulster, was claimed as such by de Valera's followers, for which reason any drastic action by the troops against Sinn Féin in the North would have assuredly resulted in outrages against the troops and police in the South, and a possible rupture of negotiations in London. The position in Ulster after the treaty of 6th December, 1921, simplified the military and police situation considerably, Sir James Craig being then at liberty to make his own arrangements without fear of affecting the position of the Crown forces in the South. In the event of the negotiations between the Government and de Valera breaking down Sir James Craig had agreed that the best plan would be to remove all troops from Ulster, the border being guarded, so far as the strength of the troops admitted, and law and order being maintained in the six counties by an Ulster police force trained and disciplined by officers seconded from the Army.

On 21st November I received an urgent telegram to go to London, and found that it was in consequence of a somewhat fiery circular on the subject of the Special Constabulary issued by Sir

James Craig, or one of his Ministers, which had disturbed the Sinn Fein delegates, and for which the Prime Minister thought I was responsible. The circular was withdrawn, but during several days after its appearance an orgy of shooting took place in the streets of Belfast. Evidently nerves were badly strained in the North, for on the day of my return to Dublin a message came from London to the effect that if troops were not sent to Belfast Sir James Craig could not hold the population. General Cameron, however, in a conversation on the telephone put a very much less serious aspect on the situation. On the following day I went to Belfast, and found that though the situation was serious it had been exaggerated.

Writing to Henry Wilson on 26th and 27th November I gave him an account of what had happened :—

“ I spent yesterday at Belfast, and saw, in addition to Cameron, the two policemen and some of Craig’s Cabinet. . . . B—— sent a very windy telegram to Craig, which considerably exaggerated the state of affairs. . . . The present pogrom up there started on the 19th and 20th by occasional shots after dark in the Ballymacarret area by both parties. No damage was done, and, of course, no one could tell who began it. On 21st rioting took place in the same area, and a Protestant was killed. From that onwards promiscuous shooting on both sides has occurred, including the burning of the Roman Catholic chapel in the Newtonards Road, and finally the bombing of a workmen’s tram in the Royal Avenue on 24th. One has to remember that the latter incident has more in it than the ordinary religious or political antagonism. As you know, there are 15,000 Roman Catholic workmen thrown out of work at the shipyards, and when they see the workmen’s trams full of Protestant workmen coming along, their religious or political feelings are further inflamed by the fact that they see their late comrades in work coming back with their wages in their pockets, and hence the outrages of that kind. I sent up two strong companies of the Lancashire Fusiliers yesterday, and they are followed to-day by another 150 men.

I sent that telegram yesterday about the two battalions to the War Office really to soothe the feelings of Craig’s Cabinet, who had

the wind up very badly, and were talking wildly about promiscuous shooting all over the place when an outrage occurred. I tried to get into their heads that if the whole British Army was sent to Belfast it would not stop individual assassination, and that in my opinion there were now enough troops there to cope with any serious collective rioting that might take place. I told them quite clearly that I would not allow the troops to work with the Special Constabulary, unless the latter were, in the event of martial law, placed under me.

The two policemen (Wickham and Gelston) are dead against Specials being used in Belfast for the reason that, rightly or wrongly, the Specials are looked upon by Sinn Fein as the equivalent to the I.R.A., and if they are used the S.F. will at once start murdering the R.I.C., whose uniform is very similar.

. . . . .

Cameron telephoned just now to say that, with the exception of a dock policeman being killed last night, things are quiet, and that the arrival of Craig has made a great deal of difference up there, and soothed the nerves of his Cabinet."

I heard among other things at Belfast that "war" was to recommence on 6th December in the South ; also an amusing story which illustrates the religious fanaticism of the North. It so happened that a battalion of the Norfolk Regiment was stationed at Belfast, the same regiment that was there in the days of 1914, when Carson reigned at Craigavon. This battalion, whose men were drawn from the English eastern counties, had a deservedly high reputation, and invariably carried out their unpleasant duties in Belfast without discrimination as to whether rioters were Catholics or Protestants. An Ulster Cabinet Minister asked that they should be moved from Belfast. On being asked his reason, he said they were all Catholics, and as such biased against the Protestants. Inquiry being made at the battalion orderly room, it was ascertained that they had a sprinkling of Catholics, such as all units have, about thirty or forty altogether. It then came out that this Northern diehard had worked it out to his own satisfaction that the Duke of Norfolk being the representative of the Catholic laity in England, the Norfolk Regiment, with whom,

by the way, the Duke has no connection, must be composed of Catholics. Truly the depths of fanatical imagination are unfathomable.

In the meantime the rebels in the South were as busy as ever, the month of December opening with the wounding of an officer at Athlone, and assaults on two others near Kilkenny, who drove off their assailants with their automatics. De Valera was vapouring about the country entertaining the natives with such phrases as : "We stand or fall upon the rock of principle," "We will never bend the knee to the rule of a foreign nation," finishing up a few hours before his delegates put their signatures to the treaty with : "Prisoners not forgotten." Before long he himself was to enjoy the seclusion of an Irish gaol.

At the secret meeting of the Dail on the 4th December to discuss the acceptance or non-acceptance of the Government terms the voting was equal, but the delegates returned to London that night.



THE LAST KING'S BIRTHDAY REVIEW IN PHENIX PARK, DUBLIN

June 3, 1922





## CHAPTER XX.

FROM the morning papers of 6th December, 1921, we knew that an agreement had been reached, an agreement which, in the words of Mr. Lloyd George a few days later, was to "win a deep, abiding, passionate loyalty" from the people of Ireland, a forecast which those of us in Ireland thought savoured of excessive optimism resulting from a complete ignorance of the Irish.

The position for the last five months had been sufficiently puzzling to me, who had occasional opportunities of hearing what was going on behind the political veil, but to those who were further removed from such sources of information the situation seemed more and more bewildering as the days rolled on. Directly I saw the announcement in the press I wrote an identical letter to all my Divisional and District Generals in the following terms, to give them a line to work on until the situation developed :—

" You will by this time have seen the announcement in the papers that an agreement has been come to by the Cabinet with Sinn Fein. I know no more than you do, but am quite sure that we are not out of the wood yet, and that if our Government is able to pull this through and to ensure some kind of acquiescence on the part of Ulster, it will be still some time before we can look on things as settled, or relax vigilance.

I am quite sure that the extreme party of Sinn Fein and gunmen, whose trade will be gone if peace results, will do everything they can to endeavour to cause a break, in the hope that it will bring about a complete rupture. It is now vitally important that, so far as the troops are concerned, every officer and man should clearly understand what they may be up against on the part of the extremists, and be particularly careful not to be drawn by them. Of course, if the extremists should, in any part of the country, endeavour to

commit outrages they must be at once suppressed, but the point I want to make is that breaches, if they occur, must be localized as far as possible, and the action of the troops be such that there is no question as to the onus being on Sinn Fein.

Further, it must be understood by all ranks that the mere fact of an arrangement having been come to does not imply any slackness or want of vigilance on their part until further instructions are received."

After events proved that my diagnosis of the intentions of the extremists was more than justified.

On the afternoon of 6th December, I was telegraphed for to go at once to London, and on the following day met the Irish delegates as they were coming out of 10 Downing Street. Collins in passing said he hoped I was satisfied with the arrangement that had been come to. I told him that everything depended on his being able to use his automatic effectively on a hundred or two of the extremists, which, as he was untrammelled by the press or the telephone to Whitehall, I had no doubt he would be able to accomplish. He laughingly agreed that something of the sort might be necessary. His hesitation to take sufficiently drastic action against such men eventually cost him his life a few months later.

The questions of the release of the internees and the withdrawal of the troops were under discussion while I was in London. On the first point I was only too glad for the sake of the troops to be quit of the whole lot, and if the garrison was to be at once reduced it would be difficult to find the necessary guards. The releases commenced on 9th December and continued until the camps and prisons were cleared. Men under sentence of courts-martial or military courts were not affected.

On 10th December some light-hearted Irishmen threw bombs near a train containing internees released from Ballykinlar, upon which Sir Hamar Greenwood sent a violent telegram to G.H.Q. accusing the troops of being the culprits. In view of the past

record of discipline among the soldiers in Ireland I was justly incensed, especially as on investigation it was found that what actually happened was that some Sinn Feiners to celebrate the releases placed fog signals on the line, and as the train passed, in order to still further emphasize their Hibernian delight and make more noise, threw a few bombs which of course they had handy in their pockets. The bombs were not thrown at the train, nor was anybody injured.

In sending in my report I did not hesitate to regret that the Chief Secretary should have been led into such hasty and ill-considered action. Some excuse for such a gratuitous insult to the troops might be found in the nerve strain under which Whitehall appeared to be suffering at this time, possibly a reaction after the signing of the treaty, as will be seen from the following extract of a letter written by me on 18th December to a high official in London :—

“ At 11-30 p.m. on Saturday (17th) we got a most extraordinary telephone message from the War Office to the effect that a rebel army was marching from the Curragh on Dublin, that Belfast was more or less in a state of siege, and no telegram could be delivered or taken. As regards the rebel army, we went to bed and waited for it to arrive, and it has not done so yet, so I can only imagine that their marching powers are a little deficient.

We asked Belfast, who said that everything was quite normal there, including the sporadic shooting, which is, of course, part of the life of the town; the trams were running, and the only difference was that the curfew had been imposed a little earlier on a certain district.

It will be interesting to know where the official on duty at the War Office got his information from, and the originator of the canard might possibly be told that this sort of thing is unlikely to happen without our knowing about it earlier than even London.”

As regards the removal of the troops from Ireland it was decided that the evacuation should be begun as soon as possible, hopes being held out that the last of the soldiers might be cleared

out by the spring. These hopes, as events proved, were far from being realized.

Two days before Christmas I was again hurriedly sent for to London about some details in connection with the evacuation. Irish affairs had by this time been taken over by the Colonial Office under the hand of Mr. Winston Churchill, who was enthusiastic over the success of the treaty, and, like all the politicians, ignored the somewhat humiliating situation imposed upon the troops so long as they remained in that country. It was on this occasion that he suggested that in a short time the British and Free State troops would be saluting each other. I could not quite make out if he was in earnest or only pulling my leg. However, I made it plain that they would never do so under orders from me, on which he reminded me, this time certainly in a lighter vein, that there had been no ill-will between Sir F. E. Smith and myself over the unfortunate incident of January, 1916; to this I agreed, but pointed out at the same time that neither "F. E." nor I had tried to murder each other.

It was during this visit to London that Henry Wilson told me that the first intimation that he received of the selection of Lord Cavan to succeed him as C.I.G.S. was when he opened his newspaper at breakfast—probably the only occasion on which a man of his position was not consulted by the Government of the day as to the choice of his successor.

The main topic of interest as the year opened was whether Dail Eireann would ratify the treaty or not, and, although those of us who were on the spot were not optimistic that ratification would ensure peace, the War Office was naturally only too ready to jump at the chance of getting troops from Ireland to meet urgent demands in other parts of the world. On 7th January I wrote to Henry Wilson :—

"It is difficult to foresee what a mad visionary like de Valera will do if the ratification is passed and he resigns. It is quite on the

cards, as you say, that he may raise the Republican flag somewhere down in the South or West, and get some hundreds of gunmen who realize their occupation is gone round him, and give considerable trouble, and that is why until we are quite sure that nothing of the sort is likely to occur, or, if it does, that Griffith, Collins and Co. will be able to deal at once with it effectively, I was a bit anxious about the removal of those signallers, the effect of which may be to leave some of our detachments more or less *en l'air*.

I gather that it is Collins's intention the moment he comes into power to send a picked gang of murderers down to the South to settle up the gunmen there who have been giving trouble, and, among other things, kidnapped *The Times* correspondent. Of course, if he really means business, and kills off a score or two, it may have the effect of keeping the country sufficiently quiet to allow us to get out."

On the evening this was written word came that the treaty had been agreed to by sixty-four votes against fifty-seven, and on the following day de Valera and his fifty-six adherents held a secret meeting at the Mansion House, where doubtless the seed was sown of the civil war which was to celebrate the grant of a measure of freedom undreamed of by Irish patriots of the past.

On 10th January Arthur Griffith was elected President of the Dail, in place of de Valera, by two votes.

The lukewarm reception of the treaty terms by the Dail was no surprise to those who understood the composition of that assembly. The majority of its members were extremists holding positions in the I.R.A. to whom the prospect of a peaceful solution of the seven centuries' strife between Great Britain and Ireland was by no means welcome, removing, as it might, all cause for complaint and imposing the necessity to work. The optimistic imagination of Mr. Winston Churchill that the acceptance of the treaty would result in a cessation of disturbance and a loyal interpretation of its terms was by no means shared by the Crown forces in Ireland, who were fated to endure another twelve months of constant anxiety and humiliation, and who appreciated the future situation with considerable accuracy. The restless precipitancy of

the chief of the Colonial Office also led him on occasions to interfere in purely military matters which did not make for smooth working on either side of the Channel, although held in check during the time Henry Wilson retained his post as C.I.G.S.

As soon as agreement had been reached on the treaty the question of the date on which the Irish Provisional Government should be set up became a matter for discussion. Unfortunately for our late opponents the Labour elements in Ireland decided that the moment was opportune to start a general strike, the railwaymen threatening to take over the lines, which placed Griffith and his Cabinet in an awkward dilemma in case their first act as a Government might be to call on British troops to come to their aid against the strikers. It was a truly Irish situation, and caused considerable amusement to those in the know. The obstacle, however, was surmounted, and at 2 p.m. on 16th January, 1922, the Government of Ireland was formally handed over to Sinn Fein by the Lord-Lieutenant. The ceremony had originally been arranged for an earlier hour, but Collins and Co. failed to put in an appearance, a mark of disrespect on a par with Collins's bombastic announcement that he had taken "the surrender of the Castle."

The Provisional Government very wisely refrained from using the Castle as Government offices, and for many months it sheltered the daily diminishing remnant of the R.I.C., and such representatives of the Irish Office as remained to complete the transfer of the Government machine. General Boyd, commanding the Dublin District, whose headquarters had been in the Castle, removed shortly afterwards to the now empty lodge of the Chief Secretary in Phoenix Park.

From a sentimental standpoint it was sad to realize that the old stronghold, dating back to the days of King John, had passed out of the hands that had held it through the long centuries, but from every other point of view under the circumstances

prevailing in Ireland it was a relief to be quit of it. In the imagination of the Irish the Castle for centuries had been a den of iniquity, in which plots were hatched for the persecution of the natives, its very name being synonymous with misrule.

The Provisional Government, and later the Free State Government, took good care to avoid establishing themselves in the old fortress which eventually became the home of the Law Courts, after they had been burnt out of their original abode. From a military point of view I was devoutly thankful when the Castle was handed over, as its defence absorbed a considerable number of men, and even with a large garrison the place was in every way unsuited to defence. Hemmed in and overlooked by houses on all sides, with narrow tortuous approaches, the lives of the garrison, had the rebels been more enterprising, would have been in hourly peril; nor were there any compensating advantages, the situation of the place being unsuitable as a tactical point for the protection of the town under modern conditions. Many of the civilian and police officials who were obliged to live in the Castle, owing to the scarcity of protected accommodation, were visibly affected by the gloomy and insanitary surroundings, the firing that broke out almost every night in the centre of the city, and the very real danger to anyone going in or out from gunmen in the narrow streets or in adjacent houses. On more than one occasion evidences were not wanting that mining operations were contemplated from the cellars of houses built against the Castle walls. The "surrender" of the place, therefore, apart from the question of prestige, was a distinct advantage.

On account of the reinforcements which had been sent over to Ireland during the previous June and July, England was practically denuded of troops, and reliefs were required for the garrisons abroad. It was, therefore, arranged that a part of the garrison should leave Ireland as soon as the treaty was ratified



by the Dail. The general scheme was that the evacuation should be divided into two phases—the first, which was to commence at once, being the removal of all troops not required to garrison Dublin, Cork and the Curragh ; the second phase, the evacuation of Cork, the Curragh, and finally Dublin, to take place when the political situation admitted. At the beginning of the year it was hoped that both phases might be completed by Easter, 1922. The first troops were embarked during the latter part of January, 1922, but, as will be seen, the situation became so involved as the year advanced that it was not until the closing days of December that the last of the soldiers left Ireland, and indeed there were moments when the reoccupation of the island seemed to hang on a thread.

A few days before the first troops were due to leave the following order was published to the Army in Ireland :—

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

by

GENERAL RT. HON. SIR C. F. N. MACREADY, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,  
Commanding-in-Chief, Ireland.

The Government having decided that the time has arrived to commence withdrawing troops from Ireland, I wish to express to every officer, W.O., N.C.O., and man my deep appreciation of the services they have rendered during the time they have formed part of the Irish Command.

While I feel there is no desire on the part of the Army to rake up past animosities or bitterness, you have been called upon to perform a duty in many respects repugnant to our traditions, and devoid of all the glamour of war, though in many ways entailing greater strain and greater individual danger.

The call has been answered in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the service. I honestly believe that no other troops in the world would, or could, have carried through the work on which you have been engaged without loss of morale and prestige. You, officers and men, have accomplished the most difficult task that any soldier can be called upon to undertake, and you have emerged with your discipline unshaken, and your conduct in the eyes of all fair-minded men blameless.

When history is written you will find that by your pluck, vigilance, and discipline you have contributed no inconsiderable share towards what we hope may prove eventually to be the settled peace and prosperity of Ireland.

I tender to you all my personal and grateful thanks for lightening the burden incidental to the Command of the Forces in Ireland during the last twenty months, and it will ever be an honour and a pride to me to have had the privilege of commanding soldiers who, whether in peace or war, or under the abnormal conditions in which we found ourselves, have proved second to none.

General Headquarters, Parkgate, Dublin.

17th January, 1922.

On 18th January, Henry Wilson came for the night to the Royal Hospital on his way to Belfast, where I joined him to discuss with Sir James Craig certain questions connected with the action of the troops when assisting the Ulster police in the suppression of rioting. It was a curious coincidence that an hour or so after Wilson had left for Belfast my old friend Dr. Simms\* came in to see me. Little that day did we think that within a few months he would have succeeded to the representation of County Down rendered vacant by the brutal murder of Henry Wilson.

From the day that the Provisional Government assumed its responsibilities it was incumbent on me in virtue of my official position to transact certain business with them personally. To do so by correspondence was hopeless, as letters were rarely answered, and when, as occasionally happened, a matter was urgent I went to see the Provisional Executive, at first in the City Hall, and later in their barred fortress in Merrion Street.

It was not a pleasant duty, nor was it any mitigation that the politicians had taken the Provisional Executive to their bosoms. The men who had been murdered through the length and breadth of the land were to the politician merely pawns in the game; to the soldier they were his comrades.

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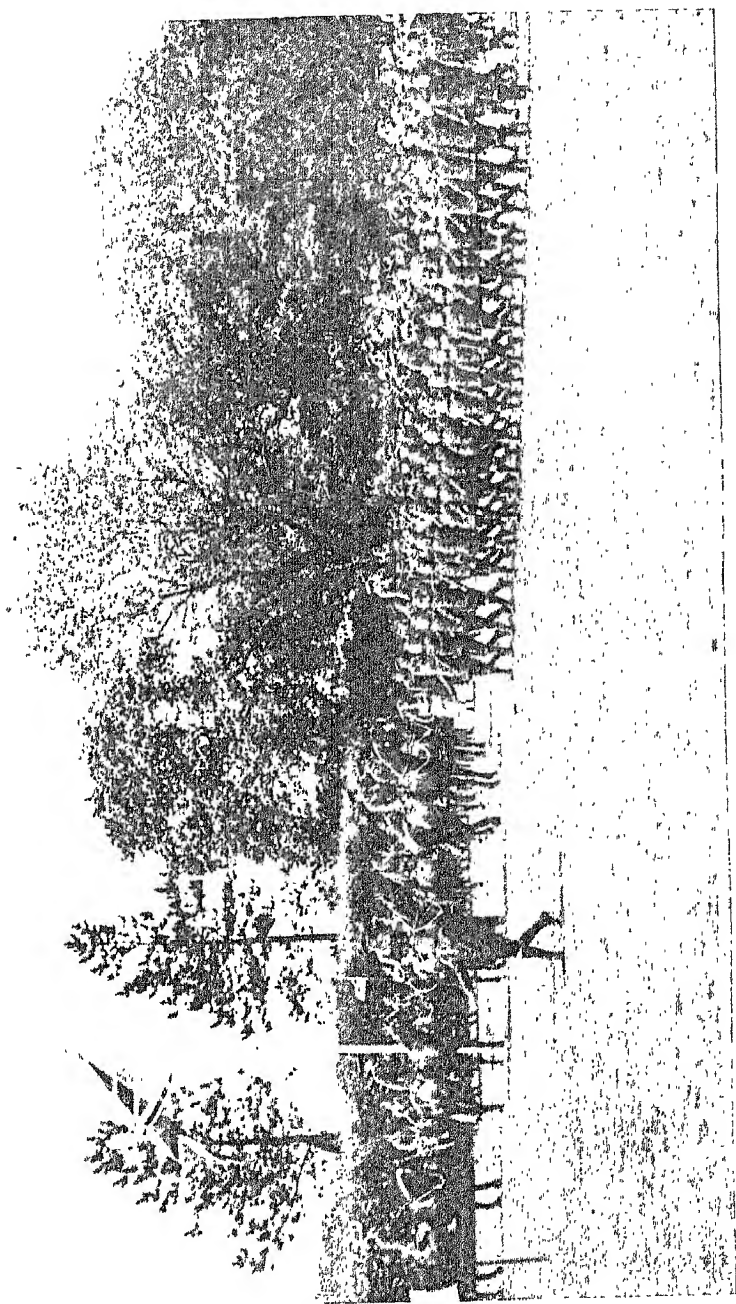
\* The Very Rev. John M. Simms, D.D., C.B., C.M.G. M.P. for Co. Down. Moderator, Presbyterian Church, Ireland (1919-1920). Principal Chaplain, British Expeditionary Force, 1914-1920.

Still the work, unpalatable though it might be, had to be done, and it was some consolation to find that a predecessor in the office of Commander-in-Chief in Ireland over a century before had been in much the same predicament, for in writing to a friend in 1799 Lord Cornwallis says : "I trust I shall live to get out of this most cursed of all situations, and most repugnant to my feelings. How I long to kick those whom my public duty obliges me to court."

Plans had already been made for the concentration of the British forces in Dublin on an arc to the west of the town running from Richmond Barracks, through the Phoenix Park and the Royal Barracks to the North Dublin Union, a position which in case of trouble would offer facilities for defence, and present a well-defined enceinte. Collins, in the seclusion of his office, did not seem at all anxious that the last of the troops should leave at an early date, mentioning June as a convenient time, because he was fearful of the consequential increase of unemployment, and evidently uneasy as to his power to control de Valera's men. In his speeches, and at press interviews, he of course harped on his determination to get rid of the last "redcoat" as soon as possible.

No sooner was the Provisional Government installed than men were set feverishly to work to paint all the red pillar boxes green, the effect being somewhat spoilt in the eyes of the Irish by the survival of the Royal monogram, which could not be obliterated. Another important step was the abolition of the English names of certain places, and their replacement by Erse designations which were beyond the powers of ninety-nine per cent. of the population to pronounce, much less to read.

The comparative calm which followed the ratification of the treaty was rudely broken early in February, when members of the I.R.A. raided over the Ulster border, from that portion of County Monaghan which projects into Tyrone, and carried off



BOYS OF THE ROYAL HIBERNIAN MILITARY SCHOOL MARCHING PAST AT THE LAST  
KING'S BIRTHDAY REVIEW



a number of prisoners. The raid was without doubt timed to take place on the very day after the troops who had been quartered at Clones left that place in accordance with the concentration scheme, so that no soldiers were nearer than at Dublin or the Curragh. Two days later, through an extraordinary blunder on the part of the Ulster authorities, a reinforcement of Constabulary was sent from Belfast to Enniskillen via Clones Station, in Free State territory, instead of by the longer but safe route to the North. As a result they were attacked at Clones by rebels or I.R.A.—at that time the terms were synonymous—four being killed, eight wounded, and seven captured.

The affair made considerable stir, and emphasized the danger which threatened the whole country owing to the lack of any control over the numbers of armed men roaming about Southern Ireland. Sir James Craig being most unfortunately in London the Ulster Cabinet, or some of them, affected the state of panic usual on such occasions, and sent wild messages to London; among others, one that General Cameron required more troops, which proved to be entirely without foundation, Cameron not having been even consulted or asked to give any assistance. This opened the whole question of the defence of the border, for which there were ample troops but no accommodation at points suitable for the purpose. After much discussion, and a good deal of talk about "reassuring the public" in Ulster, it was finally decided that the frontier should be guarded by Ulster Constabulary, troops being located at certain points within the six counties from which they could if necessary readily reinforce the police.

Meanwhile the railway strike was continuing its normal course. De Valera, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against everybody in general and the Provisional Government in particular, was perambulating the country stirring up trouble; Michael Collins, in order to strengthen his political position, was urging the Government to accelerate the evacuation of the Army,

and rumours were afloat of a plot to massacre the R.I.C. as they collected from out-stations in the South. The troops in the meantime, except at certain main centres, were either concentrating or in process of so doing, and the Intelligence service under the terms of the truce was dormant, a state of affairs which combined to make the situation as anxious as it could well be, especially to those who had not a blind faith in either the intention or the ability of the Provisional Government to carry out the terms of the treaty. Such scepticism might well be pardoned when Michael Collins, one of the outstanding figures of the treatyites, made no secret of his interpretation of the treaty as the stepping-stone to a Republic.

A few days later instructions were received to organize a kind of Border Commission, composed of British officers, I.R.A. officials, and Ulster Constabulary officers, to move on each side of the border in constant communication with each other, and by interchanging information to allay apprehensions that might arise. This brain-wave of Mr. Churchill's was announced in the House of Commons on 15th February. To those who knew anything of two of the component parts of the Commission, the I.R.A. and Ulster representatives, the scheme was foredoomed to failure, though no doubt it looked very attractive in Whitehall.

No time was lost in selecting four British officers, two for each side of the border, and in asking the Ulster Government to nominate their representatives. I saw Collins personally, who agreed to pick out two suitable men and that the work should begin on 18th February. This Commission lingered on until 21st April, 1922, when the cars of British officers were stolen either by de Valera's or the Provisional Government's adherents, and I recalled the remains of the Commission three days later.

From the first, in spite of the loyal efforts of the British officers, the whole affair was a farce. The only representative of the Provisional Government who occasionally put in an

appearance was a friend and ally of one Hogan, who commanded the I.R.A. force on the border, the cause of all the trouble, and over whom Collins had no control, or, if he had, did not exercise it. The representative of the Ulster Government, owing to instructions he had received from his Government, was a mere cipher, who, though willing, was unable to exert any influence. From that time until the troops left Southern Ireland the Ulster border was maintained by the Constabulary supported by the military, except for a few months when the western corner, which went by the name of the Pettigoe Triangle, was taken over entirely by the troops.

Owing to the loose way in which the Article 12 of the Treaty of December, 1921, was drawn, and the omission at the time to consult the Ulster Government, whose interests were, and are, as vital as those of the South, the border is likely to remain a festering sore in the relations between the two parts of Ireland. That the actual boundary line requires adjustment no one who is acquainted with the geographical aspect will deny. The line of demarcation runs in places through the centre of villages, and at one spot, the Pettigoe Triangle, persons going into it from Ulster have to pass through Southern territory.

Such a state of affairs is, of course, not uncommon in Continental countries, where the inhabitants on both sides of a frontier line live in peace and amity. When travelling along the Franco-Belgian frontier I inquired in several small towns, through which the border line ran, whether friction or inconvenience occurred, and was assured that except for the presence of a few gendarmes of both countries there was little to indicate that the places were not of one nationality. But then, of course, the French and the Belgians are sensible people, who desire to live, and let live, undisturbed by religious or political fanaticism. That the thorny question of the boundary between Northern and Southern Ireland will ever be solved by outside interference,



whether under treaties or by commissions, I do not believe. Such interference will only tend to aggravate a situation that will remain explosive until time and common sense, aided by economic pressure, gradually heal up the wounds which had their origin away back in 1641, the cure of which would go far to bring about that unity of Ireland dreamed of by many outside political circles on the northern side of the border as well as by the mass of their countrymen of the South.

It was particularly unfortunate that in the midst of this turmoil the Army was to lose the guidance and support of the great Irish Field-Marshal, my old friend Henry Wilson, whose appointment as C.I.G.S. came to an end on 18th February, 1922. To me the loss of his unvarying support and knowledge of the conditions of Ireland at this time was a personal disaster, to say nothing of the close friendship between us. The following letter is typical of the man :—

18/2/22.

“ My dear Make Ready,

My last letter, as C.I.G.S., to you is being written rather late at night, and on my last day as C.I.G.S. Your letter reached me this afternoon. I like quite enormously to remember our common work over all these years, but more especially in the last two years, since you went to Ireland. If anything in the world would try our tempers and our friendship it would have been that, and that these two elemental forces have come through the test not only unimpaired but greatly strengthened, speaks volumes for my country ! and for you and me ! Who says that the Union was a mistake !

I'll never become a politician. Forty-one years of King's commission in Militia and Regulars surely makes one impervious, and if you add that twelve years of that has been in close proximity to the ' Misery '\* you fortify a fortification. Yes, please write to me occasionally, and I will always answer.

I don't think, unless I am opposed, that I shall have to go over to North Down for a few weeks, but if I ever go by Dublin I will indeed bark for ' board, lodging and entertainment.'

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\* i.e., politics.

This C.I.G.S., as C.I.G.S., bids you good-bye, but as a friend he remains ever yours gratefully and ever yours firmly and affectionately,

HENRY."

Whether Henry Wilson, had he lived, would have developed into a politician, as the term is generally understood, is perhaps open to doubt, but had he done so he would have been one who would have put his honest convictions, founded upon an unrivalled knowledge of Empire and all that it means, before the petty claims of party or personal advancement. Wilson's departure from the War Office synchronized with a fresh outbreak of violence in Southern Ireland, one officer being murdered at Cork, another and a sergeant just outside Dublin, for neither of which crimes was redress forthcoming from the Provisional Government, who were at their wits' end to know how to curb de Valera's gunmen while retaining a semblance of authority over their own followers.

Raids on barracks about to be vacated by the R.I.C. took place at Tipperary and Clonmel, no resistance being offered, which resulted in the loss of several hundreds of rifles and some machine guns, while, to crown the existing state of uncertainty, Arthur Griffith and his advisers decided to postpone the elections for three months, a step which could not fail to strengthen de Valera's party and proportionately weaken the treatyites who, had they been allowed to vote, would at that time have swept the country.

From the first, however, Collins showed extreme hesitation in dealing with the opposing gunmen. Judging from reports in the press, desperate battles were fought in which casualties were conspicuously absent, and which ended up by both sides carousing together in what was described as a "splendid spirit of comradeship," a state of affairs not calculated to enforce the will of the governing body at Dublin.

At Limerick the situation was rather more comic, if equally explosive, than in other parts. One day I received an urgent

message from the civilian Staff who still functioned in the Castle asking that all troops in Limerick town might be confined to barracks, as Collins was sending two hundred gunmen to deal with the Valeraites. This was done. The Provisional Government men arrived, and established themselves in a barrack which had been vacated and handed over, de Valera's men occupying houses and inns. For about a week both parties looked at each other, and to some extent fraternized, while some priests busied themselves to bring about a peaceful solution agreeable to both sides. Suddenly, to everybody's surprise, both parties disappeared from the town.

The British garrison had been brought down to two weak battalions, and I determined to get them away before further trouble in which they might be involved occurred. This was the more necessary because at any moment the railways might cease to run, and though the troops could have been brought by sea they might have been sniped from the northern bank of the Shannon on their march to the point of embarkation at Foynes, and I did not consider that the lives of our men should be at risk because Collins was unwilling to take effective measures against those in arms against his Government. Notification was sent to Collins that the move would take place on 11th March, but at his urgent request it was postponed until 21st. At 9 p.m. on 20th March a subordinate official at the Castle, who telephoned to say that the Provisional Government wanted the troops to remain at Limerick, was told that it was too late to cancel the arrangements. About midnight word came from the officer commanding at Limerick that the Provisional Government representative refused to take over the barracks, and declared that, if the troops left, a Republic would be proclaimed in Munster. If matters had indeed gone so far, which I did not believe, I considered it all the more necessary to remove the weak detachment as soon as possible, and told the officer that the orders he had received were to stand.

Accordingly early the following morning the troops came through safely to the Curragh.

The liaison official in Dublin, Major-General E. Dalton, was sent round by Collins to see me on 21st, and then I learned what all the excitement had been about, excitement which had spread to the Colonial Office in London, to whom Collins had appealed to force my hand, and Mr. Churchill had sent a violent telegram to the War Office to be forwarded on to me, which, however, did not get beyond that department. According to Dalton, who was one of the few men in the service of the Provisional Government who had any practical knowledge of military matters, the whole trouble arose because Dalton wished to send certain men on whom he could rely to occupy the barracks at Limerick, but his politicians would not agree, being desirous of putting local men whom Dalton knew to be untrustworthy into the barracks.

And so it turned out that the proclamation of a Republic in Munster was nothing more or less than a bit of Irish blarney to enable the politicians to get the better of their military advisers. I told Dalton that if he liked I would ask the Admiral to send a destroyer up the river to shell out the Republicans if they gave trouble, but the offer was not accepted, nor, of course, did the departure of the troops affect in any way the situation between the Provisional Government and de Valera. To have left the troops at Limerick might have exposed them for no good purpose to considerable danger, and in case of a collision have united both Irish factions against them, while reinforcement or relief could only have been carried out in such circumstances by sea, as the railways would assuredly have been cut.

It was a satisfaction when during the last week of March all outlying troops had been brought into Dublin, Cork, or the Curragh, a concentration which gave not only a feeling of security, but placed what was left of the Army in a position to deal some hard knocks in the event of de Valera securing the allegiance of a majority of

the I.R.A., a contingency which at that time did not seem at all improbable. Small flying columns were kept in readiness at each centre, and were employed now and again to bring in outlying parties of the R.I.C., whose concentration and disbandment dragged on over a period which appeared unnecessarily drawn out. One explanation of the delay was the financial haggling in London over pensions and compensation ; but whatever it may have been it was unfortunate that earlier arrangements were not made by which lives might have been saved, and a considerable number of arms preserved from one Irish party or the other.

The activities of de Valera's men were by no means confined to the twenty-six southern counties, for ever since the raid into Ulster early in February a state of unrest had prevailed along parts of the border, and the atmosphere in Belfast became more explosive than usual. There is little doubt that the trouble in Belfast was fomented by persons belonging to, or in close touch with, the Provisional Government, and in this respect they co-operated with the Valeraites. But the responsibility for trouble could not be laid on the shoulders of any one party, whether belonging to the South or the North, as was shown by a careful record of the casualties in Belfast from 10th February to 6th March, 1922, which worked out as follows :—

Protestants	...	12 killed	51 wounded
Roman Catholics	...	25 killed	71 wounded

Each fresh outbreak was followed by wildly exaggerated reports to London from the Ulster Government, and violent threats of retaliation by Sinn Fein and its subservient press.

At this time, when the Ulster Government was in being, the remedy lay in its own hands by reorganizing the Constabulary so as to make it an effective force, and by introducing legislation to bring the carrying and use of firearms under the most drastic punishment of the law. The example of a few men being brought before a court for carrying or using arms, followed by instant

execution, would have stamped out the trouble in Belfast in a few days, provided that no partiality was shown as between Protestants and Catholics.

Sir Henry Wilson, being now free to exert his influence in the affairs of Ulster, came over to Belfast in the middle of March, and at the request of Sir James Craig put forward a scheme for the control and reorganization of the Constabulary and police on lines that he and I had discussed many times before. Shortly, it amounted to the appointment of a Military Adviser with a competent Staff to be loaned by the British Government, and to the creation of a thoroughly effective Criminal Investigation Department staffed by officials unbiased towards those political and religious currents which run so strongly in the North. Henry Wilson interested himself in securing suitable officers through the War Office, and thought that within six weeks sufficient progress would have been made to enable the police to function, until which time the troops undertook a rather greater share of police work than was indeed permitted under Army regulations. The system introduced under his proposals, which incidentally I had urged on the Northern Government some time before, although it went a long way towards placing the Ulster Police on an effective basis, was never completely realized. It is important to remember, in view of events that occurred in the future, that beyond putting forward proposals Henry Wilson had no hand or part whatever in the carrying-out of the scheme, or in directing the activities of the Ulster forces.

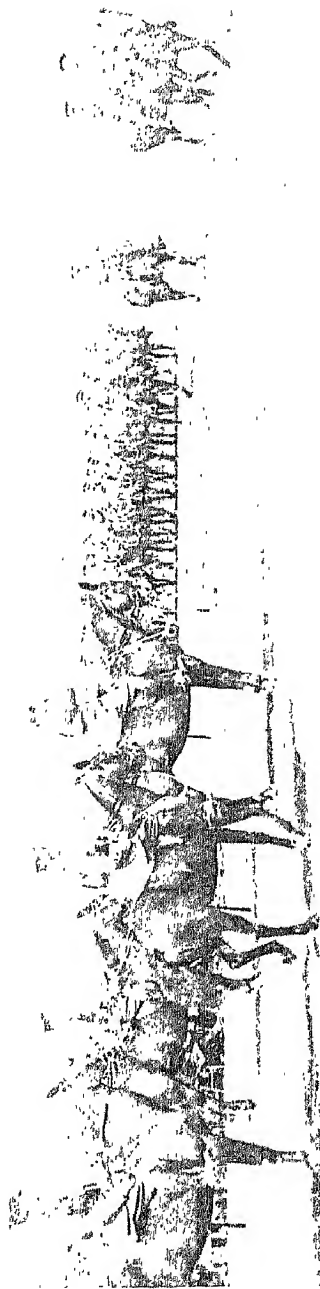
At the end of March de Valera, in defiance of Arthur Griffith, held a "convention" of the I.R.A., and a proclamation was published by his adherents foreshadowing a military directorate. On the same day, the 29th, a series of outrages occurred as if to emphasize the determination to break the treaty. A police barrack at Belcoo, on the borders of Cavan and Fermanagh, was raided and surrendered without any attempt being made to put

up a defence, two trains were burnt on the border, four officers were shot at in a motor-car just outside Dublin but happily escaped injury, General Jeudwine's car was held up and taken from him between the Curragh and Dublin, and lastly, but by no means least of all, the offices of *The Freeman's Journal* were burnt—a very just retribution at the hands of their quondam friends.

Both the Colonial Office and the Provisional Government were evidently getting considerably rattled, and beginning to have doubts about the support that Griffith and Collins could command in the country, Collins going so far as to admit that if the elections went against him he would serve as a private in the rebel I.R.A., but would not accept any official position under a Republic.

The tension was increased when in the the first days of April news came that a small steamer, the "Upnor," chartered to convey spare arms and ammunition to England, was captured by the Valerites in Cork Harbour. As the ship was leaving the harbour she was overtaken by a tug under the charge of the harbour-master of the Cork Harbour Board, and taken to a point on the coast a few miles off, where the arms were landed and removed into the country under the direction of the man Barry, who had been the Sinn Fein liaison official at Cork. The incident created a good deal of excitement, people in London metaphorically demanding the head of the Admiral in a charger, though how he or anybody else could be held responsible for the acts of Harbour Board officials serving a Government which had been installed at their own urgent insistence, and who had not ceased for years to declare that they alone could govern the country, was a problem that only people who knew little of the Irish situation could answer.

To Michael Collins this capture of arms was a perfect godsend, as it enabled him for a considerable time afterwards, whenever the pressure of Valera's gunmen became acute, to attribute it



# THE LAST KING'S BIRTHDAY REVIEW IN PHOENIX PARK, DUBLIN

June 8, 1922

Cavalry marching past





to the connivance of the British Government in supplying his opponents with arms.

On the 4th April I went to see Collins at his request, and found him in a very anxious frame of mind, though he assured me that matters were not so serious with the Government as was implied in the press. I could not help smiling, remembering how only a short time before his party had lashed an obsequious press into frenzy over the imaginary misdeeds of soldiers and police. It was only natural that the press had hardly had time to recover its equilibrium.

The two things that Collins wanted were barracks and arms. The barrack question was amicably arranged by handing over to him the Wellington Barracks in Dublin, which were not within the defensive area and which would shortly be empty; also Tallagh Camp outside Dublin. I told him that the sooner he could take over Cork and the Curragh the better I should be pleased. In regard to arms, he said that there were thousands of men waiting to join his forces as soon as they could be armed, and hinted that de Valera had more arms than the Provisional Government. To enforce his demand he urged that the British Government had lavished arms on Ulster, and given them away to the rebels, this being a sly hit at the capture of the "Upnor," and the surrender of police barracks. I told him that I would pass on his demands for arms to the Government, as it was a matter for their decision.

One advantage of dealing with Collins was that he took no offence at having things put plainly before him, and I did not fail to take the opportunity of rubbing in that the state of the country was entirely due to the supineness of his Government in not taking drastic measures against their opponents. Being a thorough Irishman he had, of course, lots of arguments to show that the fault was not his, though these were somewhat discounted by an occasional twinkle in his eye, for he knew that my knowledge of

the situation was not gained through the somewhat biased and neurotic medium of the Castle authorities.

In order to meet his views I arranged to hold on to Youghal, near Cork, for a short time longer until his affairs were more in order. Eventually Collins received all the arms he asked for. It would be interesting to know the number of rifles, revolvers and machine guns now scattered about Ireland. The result would, I think, be startling.

On 13th April the Reds, as de Valera's people were called in those days, under a man Rory O'Connor, occupied the Four Courts, an adjacent hotel, and other places in Dublin, a step which in a short time was to develop into history. During the day Cope came to see me, and confided to me that Collins would not attack the Reds unless they attacked him, and would not in any case attack them if they molested the Crown forces. Truly a pleasant situation !

It was an interesting fact that the man Rory O'Connor, the leader of the Republicans who had occupied the Four Courts and other points of vantage, had been interned up to the time of the general amnesty after the Truce. During his internment James MacMahon, the Under-Secretary, had put forward a moving plea for his release on the ground that he was suffering from consumption and would die in a few weeks. I had suspicions at the time that the plea was rather highly flavoured with blarney, and refused to be moved by it. As after events proved, Rory O'Connor's constitution was sufficiently sound to enable him to carry out considerable destruction to life and property until he was ultimately locked up again by the Provisional Government.

On the day after the Four Courts had been occupied by the Republicans I took a stroll down the quays to look at the place which for the moment was the centre of interest to the loafers and unwashed youth of Dublin. Apart from the occupation being a defiance of the Government established by the majority of Southern

Ireland it was a very real menace to the British troops, the building commanding as it did the roads on both sides of the Liffey, the ordinary route for stores going to or coming from the quays. All that could be seen in the courtyard, where a barbed-wire entanglement had been begun, were a few very dirty-looking men. The adjoining hotel had been vacated because the owner was the son of the Republican Mayor of Limerick. Another building which had been seized by the Republicans was Kilmainham Gaol, which shortly before had been handed over to the Provisional Government. As this building was on the direct road to our large supply and ordnance depot, and on the edge of the defended area, I ordered General Boyd to occupy the Court House, a strong building which commanded the exit to the prison, and from which we could have mined under the walls and made things very uncomfortable for the Red garrison. They, however, gave no trouble, and in a short time slunk away out of the place.

The day after Rory O'Connor's men had seized the Four Courts and other buildings I wrote to Michael Collins asking what action he proposed to take, pointing out that if soldiers were interfered with by the Republicans occupying these places I should have to take drastic action and make it clear to Mr. O'Connor that his followers could not with impunity attack British soldiers who were preserving a strict neutrality. The following day Cope came to tell me that Collins could not reply to my letter in writing, but had deputed him to explain the line of action which the Provisional Government wished pursued. The main point was the importance of avoiding a general conflict which would play into Rory O'Connor's hands by combining his and Collins's men against the common enemy, i.e., the British troops, a menace which had been thoroughly realized by me from the moment the Provisional Government came into being.

Collins's other suggestions were that if the Republicans fired from buildings on British soldiers in the street the fire should be

returned, and the occurrence reported to the Provisional Government, who would then consider what action they might take. This was quite reminiscent of the well known "wait and see" policy of another celebrated politician ! If Republicans fired from houses held by them into barracks occupied by troops, they were to be warned to leave the buildings, and if they fired after being warned the troops should take necessary action against them. Cope also suggested that our old acquaintance Larry O'Neill, the Lord Mayor, should use his influence with Rory O'Connor, who was numbered amongst the large circle of that shifty gentleman's friends, to induce him to clear out of Kilmainham Gaol, but I told him that the steps I had already taken were effective.

The whole situation, due to the disinclination of the Provisional Government to grasp the nettle, was most unsatisfactory, and might have become dangerous had Rory O'Connor's rabble shown any disposition to interfere with the British troops. As after events proved, they were not anxious to accept the risk and confined their attentions mainly to their own countrymen who supported the Provisional Government, an attempt being made on Collins himself on 16th April which, with the assistance of his escort, was beaten off, one of the would-be murderers being arrested.

The arrangement, such as it was, satisfied the politicians and met with the entire approval of Mr. Winston Churchill, who emphasized that intervention in any form would be a most grave act which only a supreme emergency could justify, a pronouncement which I had good reason to remember a couple of months later. The occupation of buildings by Rory O'Connor's men had a bad effect on the nerves of the Provisional Government's forces, whether in barracks or patrolling the streets, so that hardly a night passed during which the inhabitants of Dublin were not alarmed in their sleep by outbursts of rifle fire and occasional bomb explosions. Of casualties there were few.

Being in want of a holiday, Irish Labour declared a cessation of all work throughout the country on 24th April, nominally as a protest against the state of the country, forgetful for the moment that a considerable share of responsibility for that state rested on Labour support of the gunmen. The occasion was seized by some of the more advanced members of the party to plaster Dublin with posters declaring a Workers' Republic, a favourite ideal of Government among Irish enthusiasts. What was much more serious was an epidemic of car-stealing which broke out all over the country, the work of de Valera's men principally, and which the Provisional Government were unable to check. At Punchestown six cars, including one belonging to the Lord-Lieutenant, were taken under the noses of Collins's armed civic guard. A few days later Cope himself was held up by some of Rory's men in Dublin, and made to get out of his car at the muzzle of a revolver. Nothing daunted he ran off, procured another car, followed up the thieves, put a bullet through the chest of the man driving his own car and recovered it—a very plucky piece of work, and one that did not tend to make his life more comfortable during the remainder of his stay in Dublin.

The month of April closed with a crime that for senseless brutality rivalled the worst atrocities which had stained the hands of the rebels since they entered upon their campaign of murder. On 26th April three young officers and a chauffeur belonging to the Cork garrison drove out in a motor car to Macroom, for what purpose is unknown, although they visited a friend on the way, but the probability is that, although to drive about in the country was at that time in no case safe anywhere in Ireland, they decided to go as a relaxation from the boredom of barrack life. They were armed with revolvers, and from previous experience three or four armed men were generally well able to beat off an attack except by overwhelming numbers, a contingency there was no special reason to anticipate at that time. The following day it was

reported that they had been kidnapped. It was known that they had been to the inn at Macroom, and that the old castle at that place was in the hands of de Valera's men.

General Strickland immediately took the matter up with the Provisional Government's liaison people in Cork, and I informed Michael Collins of the facts, who at once ordered General Dalton to make inquiries. At first General Strickland and I were of opinion that the party had been kidnapped to be held either to ransom or for exchange for some rebels in the hands of the Provisional Government. We were both, however, anxious on one point. Two of the officers had been Intelligence officers when that branch was working before the truce, and all the rebels were known to have a special grudge against those so employed, but we hoped that neither of the two had been recognized.

During the first ten days of May I went to Cork to inquire personally into all the steps that had been, and were being, taken. To attack Macroom Castle and round up all the inmates would have presented no military difficulty, and would have been welcomed by the troops, but it was unlikely that the officers would be found, as, indeed, they would not have been, and no proof would have been forthcoming to associate the men in the castle with the deed. The services not only of adherents of the Provisional Government, but also of de Valera, were secured, with whom British officers made inquiry at every spot where there was the faintest trace of the missing party. Rewards were offered, but without avail. It became increasingly evident that the village people in Macroom, had they dared to speak, could have thrown some light on the mystery, but they were cowed by terror of the Republicans. To have given orders for an attack on Macroom Castle, as suggested by Mr. Churchill in the debate in the House of Commons on 4th July, 1922, would have given me infinite satisfaction, and to General Strickland even greater satisfaction to carry out. But apart from the fact that such a course might, from

the scant information then at our disposal, have endangered the lives of the kidnapped party, it was entirely at variance with the previous policy of the Government. When Colonel Lucas was kidnapped a few months earlier I urged that hostages for his safety should be seized, but was forbidden to take any steps in that direction.

An attack on Macroon early in May could easily have been carried out in order to secure hostages, but, so far from advocating such a course when instructions were asked for, Mr. Churchill expressed a wish that no action should be taken which would in any way embarrass the existing political situation, an instruction hardly in keeping with his attitude during the debate in Parliament.

Three battalions of the garrison were affected by this outrage, each of the missing officers belonging to a different unit, yet the self-restraint of their comrades was beyond all praise. The younger officers and men found it difficult to understand why they should be kept in the country for no obvious purpose, the butts of insolent natives, and powerless to resent outrage. Before the truce, nearly a year ago, when the "war" was in progress, certain measures were taken if outrages occurred, thereby giving an outlet to the feelings of the troops, but under the conditions prevailing at the time of the Macroon murders they were, for political reasons, condemned to sit still and brood over their situation for the convenience of the very men who a few months before had been their bitterest enemies.

For over eighteen months the fate of the little party remained one of the many unsolved tragedies of the Anglo-Irish conflict, until towards the end of 1923 the Free State authorities obtained information which led to the discovery of a grave in which the four bodies were found at a wild and desolate spot some seven miles from Macroon. The story of the tragedy, which was then extracted from persons in the neighbourhood, was that the officers



were held up in the centre of Macroom village at about 1 p.m. on 26th April, 1922, and were taken into the castle, whence they were removed during the same night to the spot where their bodies were found, and there foully murdered. It further transpired that they were not even afforded the form of mock trial which on some occasions had preceded acts of assassination, but it was known that some of the party had been Intelligence officers, a discovery which Strickland and I had feared from the first. Needless to say, no one has ever been brought to account for the crime, though the identity of those in control at the castle in April, 1922, must be well known to the Free State authorities.

If the troops maintained their discipline and the credit of their cloth, such was not always the case with parties of police who were still left kicking their heels in the country. An Englishman belonging to the R.I.C. was murdered between Gormanstown and Drogheda on the last day of April, whereupon his English comrades, to the number of a hundred, started off for Drogheda, burned de Valera's election offices, let off a few rounds of ammunition, and on the way back to Gormanstown burned the cottage near which their comrade had been murdered, a very salutary lesson both to the Government department who had left them so long in Ireland under impossible conditions and to de Valera's men, who learned what to expect if they interfered with them. As I have observed before, there are limits to the most rigid discipline, and the less rigid the discipline the sooner the limit is reached.

On the evening when I heard of this Cope rang up about 10-30 p.m. to tell me that Rory O'Connor's buccaneers had seized the Kildare Street Club and secured all the members found on the premises. Among them was a senior officer who was the Director of the now defunct Military Intelligence Department, but who was working hard to prepare it for rebirth should hostilities recommence. I told Cope that I would give the Provisional

Government an hour to get the officer out unharmed, and at the same time warned the Dublin District to have troops ready on the instant. Cope rang up again to tell me that Collins had given the Reds an ultimatum to clear out of the club by 8 a.m. next morning. This, I told him, was not good enough, as I was not going to have my officers in a house all night with Rory's crew. As a result, at 11-45 p.m. the place was surrounded by Provisional Government troops, who palavered with the Republicans, but finally secured the release of my Director and all his belongings. The Reds remained in possession of the club for some days, the ultimatum being, of course, nothing more than an Hibernian gesture.

While the Kildare Street Club incident was in full swing news arrived that the railway from the South had been cut by the Reds in three places, and that a train, to which was attached a carriage containing sick soldiers on their way to Dublin from Cork, was held up between two cuts, and could neither come on nor go back. Word was at once sent to the Curragh to send a column of armoured cars and soldiers in lorries with some motor ambulances to Thurles, about sixty miles away, to bring in our sick men. The soldiers were received with open arms by the inhabitants of Thurles, who gave them a free tea, and returned to the Curragh without any untoward incident on the following morning. In conversation with the people at Thurles it was gathered that they were thoroughly disgusted with the situation of the country, and especially with the antics of de Valera's Republicans.

While all this was going on, what was described as a furious battle was taking place at Kilkenny between the Provisional Government troops, under a Commandant Prout, and the Republicans, who, after being driven out of the houses in the town, retreated into the old castle, whose owner, Lord Ossory, was in residence. In the end the Reds surrendered, or a

composition was effected, after a few men had been wounded on both sides, the two parties adjourning to the local hotel to drink each other's healths. From all accounts, Commandant Prout, who was an American soldier of fortune, was more inclined to take effective measures to suppress the rebellion against the Provisional Government than the majority of Collins's officers, but he had at his elbow a second-in-command who cramped his style by leaning towards that "splendid spirit of comradeship," so applauded by the Irish press, which resulted in the expenditure of much ammunition, few casualties, and a fraternal carouse by both sides when they were tired of shooting. When, a few years later, the Free State reduced their armed forces, the services of Commandant Prout were dispensed with, owing doubtless to his reputation for thoroughness in the execution of his duty.

In the meantime the demands for arms and military appliances by the Provisional Government became daily more insistent, and were supported by Cope, who seemed unable to realize that if, as seemed more than probable at the time, terms were arranged between the two Irish parties, every rifle and other engine of war supplied by us might be used against the small remnant of the British troops then remaining in Ireland. Committees of the Dail and of the I.R.A., who for weeks had been endeavouring to find terms acceptable to both parties, separated without coming to any conclusion, and though the Provisional Government told Cope that they at last intended to deal with the rebels I preferred to await an outward and visible sign before I committed myself to support their demands for more arms. Hitherto encounters between the Provisional Government troops and de Valera's followers had been too much of the comic opera style, in which both sides kissed and made friends, the rebels going off with their arms to prepare for the next act.

So long as the small numbers of troops which remained were concentrated I had no fear that they would not account for any

attack made upon them, their numerical inferiority being amply compensated for by their discipline and superior armament ; but if grenades, Stokes mortars, armoured cars, and artillery were to be handed over indiscriminately to the Provisional Government the question would assume a different aspect, and might entail the loss of lives which would be sacrificed merely because Michael Collins and his adherents were unwilling to take drastic action to enforce their authority and the treaty obligations against their former comrades.

The immediate argument for a further supply of arms was the necessity for asserting the authority of the Provisional Government in Drogheda, where de Valera had his headquarters, and it further transpired that in the opinion of Collins as soon as his troops had taken Drogheda Rory O'Connor would give the British troops seventy-two hours' notice to evacuate the country, and at the expiration of that time would start murdering soldiers. The silver lining to this particular cloud was that while Collins declared he could keep the Reds in check in Dublin, he could not do so in Cork, and was therefore anxious that the troops should leave that turbulent town without delay.

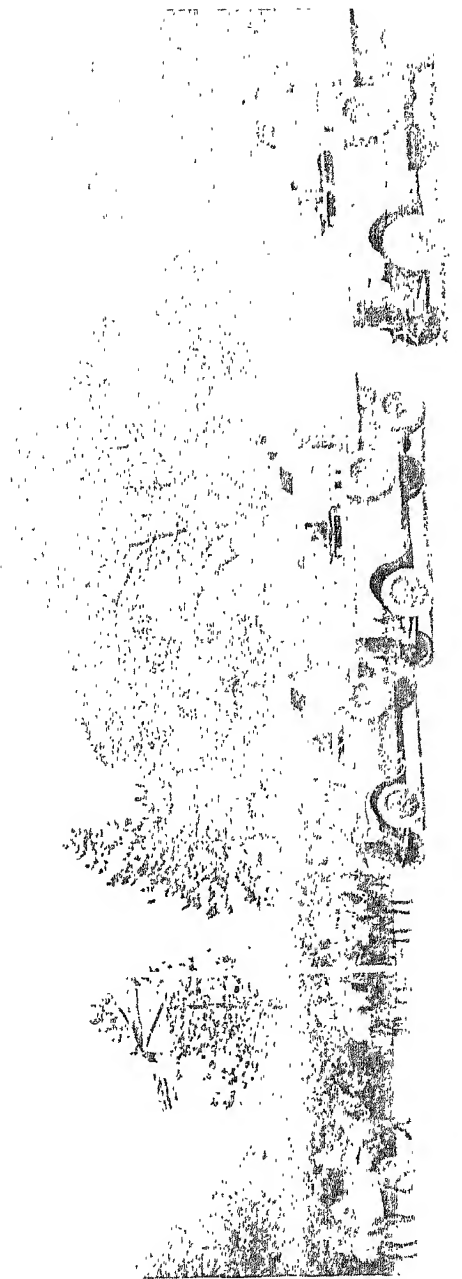
With the last of the troops from Cork went Lieutenant-General Sir P. Strickland, who for three years had borne the burden and heat of the day in the worst part of the country, and to whose firmness and patience it was due that the situation was controlled to a degree that seemed impossible when the limitations imposed by political considerations are considered. Life was not pleasant in Dublin, but in Cork it was infinitely worse, owing partly to the savage nature of the rebels in the South and partly to the position of the barracks, surrounded by a network of narrow tortuous streets. It was therefore with a sense of relief that I heard that the man who had stuck so gallantly to his post, and those under his command, had got safely away. With the evacuation of Cork the troops remaining in Ireland, apart from the permanent garrison of

Ulster, were concentrated at Dublin and the Curragh, the latter place being transferred to the Provisional Government some months later.

A few days after Cork had been handed over the Irish situation was further complicated by the pact between Collins and de Valera for a coalition and an agreed election. This news thoroughly startled the wise men in Whitehall, especially as, according to the Irish press, Collins had said that if the pact united Ireland but did not conform to the treaty the people of Ireland must take the consequences. In Ireland we were not surprised at anything Irishmen might do.

At the time opinions varied as to whether the pact was a sign of weakness on the part of the Provisional Government or merely a slim move on the part of Collins. After events, when in a speech at Cork he threw it over, showed that it was the latter. At the moment however, as I have said, the effect was disturbing, and though the politicians were anxious that a break, if it occurred, should be only on a clear-cut issue, I obtained their concurrence that if the necessity arose I should not be hindered from using the most drastic measures at my disposal to safeguard the troops and assert the authority of the Government.

In order not to be caught napping, a short proclamation to the people of Dublin was drawn up ready for issue, to the effect that, the Provisional Government having broken their pledges and attacked the British Army use would be made of every means at the disposal of the military authorities, including, should it become necessary, the shelling of Dublin, the responsibility for which would lie on the heads of the Provisional Government. The inhabitants were, therefore, warned to make arrangements for their own safety, etc. Steps were taken to ensure a requisite supply of barbed wire, together with ammunition for the heavy guns and howitzers, and all officers living outside the controlled area were warned to be ready to come inside at an hour's notice.



# THE LAST KING'S BIRTHDAY REVIEW IN PHOENIX PARK, DUBLIN

June 3, 1922

Armoured cars passing saluting point



Happily the enforcement of such extreme measures did not become necessary, although towards the end of June, as will be seen, the situation literally hung in the balance. As so often happens the political requirements did not harmonize with a sound military policy.

The Government were anxious, for political reasons, to hold Dublin in order to secure the export and import trade of the port, measures being taken at the same time to ensure the same result by a naval blockade of Cork and Limerick. In the event of a general rising, trade would perforce be suspended throughout the country, and therefore the retention of the Customs and Revenue offices would seem to have been superfluous.

At the time of the truce of July, 1921, measures to meet the political view would have been comparatively easy, but since those days the military situation had completely changed. In July, 1921, the Crown forces had a firm grip on the whole city, occupying positions in close support of each other, the Intelligence service was in effective working order, the surrounding country was held by British troops thereby giving immunity from an attack from without, and at the same time the rebels were in a disheartened and disorganized condition.

In May, 1922, the military position in Dublin was very different. The remaining troops, a dozen weak battalions with some artillery, were concentrated to the west and north-west of the city, under conditions rendering them reasonably safe against attack, but based originally on the supposition that the evacuation would take place as soon as the result of the Irish elections was known, until which time the attitude of the populace would not be unfriendly towards the troops. The country outside Dublin had by May, 1922, been cleared of troops up to the Ulster border, and the Intelligence system had been scrapped. The Irish, on the other hand, who in July, 1921, were little more than a disorganized rabble, were in May, 1922, an organized force, well armed with



rifles and machine guns supplied by the British Government. Nor did this reorganization portend any change in their tactics in the event of hostilities recommencing. Leaders of the I.R.A., who were not tied by political considerations, publicly asserted that in the event of a renewal of the "war" they would resume their former guerilla methods with men dressed in everyday clothes, and would not afford our troops the chance of meeting uniformed bodies in the field.

I had often discussed the possibility of a situation such as arose at the end of May, 1922, with Henry Wilson, and we were both agreed that to lock up a small force in Dublin would be fatal, not only to the prestige of the Empire, but to any measures which might be taken to reassert the authority of the Crown over Southern Ireland, an opinion concurred in, I think, by every soldier of practical experience in the conditions of Ireland at that time.

The campaign of murder was still being carried on in Dublin under the noses of the Provisional Government, several civilians and two soldiers being sacrificed to the blood-lust of Rory O'Connor's followers during the month of May, and little effort being made to discover the culprits ; indeed, the members of the Government themselves were practically prisoners in their offices, while at the same time the tension on the border became more strained.

During the last days of May the local press was ablaze with a projected attack by the rebels on Londonderry and an invasion of Ulster along the western frontier near the village of Pettigoe, while the Northern Government by sending exaggerated reports to London did not help the people in Whitehall to get a true perspective of the real state of affairs.

At the moment the Constitution of the Free State, which had been brought over to London in an unacceptable form on 26th May, was under discussion, and in order that the Provisional

Government might have no grounds for twisting any action by the troops on the border into an outrage, and thus invent an excuse for breaking off negotiations on the Constitution, I received instructions to do nothing which might increase the tension for a week or ten days, nor were troops to cross the border except in pursuit of bodies of invading rebels. From a military point of view these limitations were most unsatisfactory, as no steps could be taken to root out snipers on the far side of the border.

As soon as these alarmist reports came to hand officers were sent to investigate matters on the spot, when it became apparent that except for some sniping across the border line, and the presence of a few armed scallywags in the Pettigoe Triangle, the situation was in reality but little worse than its normal condition, but had been purposely exploited for political purposes. More than ever did I miss the steady hand of Henry Wilson to calm the excitement which had spread to Whitehall, whence excited messages poured across the Channel.

The Pettigoe Triangle, which was at the root of this small effervescence, is one of the geographical anomalies of the border line between Northern and Southern Ireland. A triangle some sixteen miles at the base, and seven from base to apex, it is cut off on the south by Lough Erne and the River Erne from the rest of County Fermanagh to which it belongs, and in order to enter it either from the North by the railway or main road, or from the direction of Garrison in the South, it is necessary to cross into Donegal for short distances, which in itself will always be sufficient to start trouble. In addition, the village of Pettigoe lies three-quarters in Donegal and one-quarter in Fermanagh, a stream separating the two portions, while the only other village in the triangle, Belleek, though wholly in Ulster territory, is overlooked at a distance of a few hundred yards by a hill crowned by an old fort, which dominates the entire village. A few snipers on this hill could effectually prevent any movement in the village.

When it was known that small bodies of Republican gunmen were wandering about in the triangle, troops were sent to hunt them out, and to hasten their departure by a few shells. A small number of prisoners were taken by the troops and held against certain civilians and Ulster Constabulary who had been carried off by raiding parties from the South. These men were not released until the Northerners were set free.

A few rebels in the meantime hung about Belleek, establishing themselves in the old square stone fort, built in the days of William III, which overlooks the village from the west. On 8th June these individuals began to snipe the troops in and about the village, which was very soon put a stop to by a few 4.5 howitzer shells, the first of which dropped just outside the fort, the next two or three right into it. Had the first shell exploded inside it would probably have accounted for most of the snipers, who ran for their lives towards the Donegal Hills, and did not wait for another taste of the guns.

The whole business in the Pettigoe Triangle from first to last was most tactfully and effectively carried through by General Cameron and his officers within the political limitations laid down, and I was glad to be able to pass on to him the thanks of the Secretary of State for War.

Quiet having been restored, there was much palaver between the Provisional Government representatives and the Government in Whitehall in regard to possible retaliation from the South. The Provisional Government men were not too happy because they knew that men whom they claimed as their adherents were not entirely unconnected with all the trouble on the border, although they tried to throw the blame on de Valera's men. In the end I was told to fix up a *modus vivendi* with Michael Collins. This was effected by certain villages being occupied by British troops, and a neutral zone defined at a certain distance on both sides of the border in which any persons carrying arms were to be at once



SIR NEVIL MACREADY WALKING WITH THE MASTER  
OF THE ROLLS



arrested, and those using arms shot ; the policing of the neutral zone to be carried out by unarmed police drawn from the North and South, a provision that became a dead letter in practice. The whole idea was in the nature of a temporary expedient, but the howitzer shells had had such a convincing effect on the local gunmen that I had little fear that they would show themselves for a long time to come.



## CHAPTER XXI.

WHILE all this was going on the last parade in honour of the King's birthday took place in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, on 3rd June, the turn-out and bearing of the troops, of whom about 9,000 were on parade, doing full justice to the occasion. Among the spectators, the old pensioners from the Royal Hospital wearing many medal ribbons of bygone wars, and the boys of the Royal Hibernian Military School, who marched past in rear of the infantry, made up a picture which could not fail to appeal to those who realized that never again would British troops salute the flag on that ground which for so long had been the scene of their activities, and that the death-knell had rung for two time-honoured institutions so closely connected with our Army, whose representatives were present on parade. At the time I write the Royal Hibernian Military School has ceased to exist, and though some old pensioners are still sheltered within the walls of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, it will not be long before that grand old building is diverted to other uses.

The day was one of particular sadness to me, for, on my return from parade, I received news of the death of my late aide-de-camp, Lieutenant M. Mott—Mottie, as we all called him—who had been killed in a frontier raid in Mesopotamia three weeks after he had arrived in that country. He had been with me for nearly two years, and thinking, as we all did, that all troops would have left Ireland by the spring of 1922, he applied for special service in the East, and met a soldier's death while covering the retreat of his party after they had inflicted punishment on the raiders.



The ties between a General Officer and his aides-de-camp during the troublous times in Ireland were somewhat closer than is the case under ordinary service conditions. There was always an idea that the rebels would be only too glad to add the higher officials, civil or military, to the number of their victims, and, therefore, whenever I left the precincts of the Royal Hospital the aide-de-camp with me was always on the *qui vive* at any likely spots for suspicious-looking individuals, our automatics lying handy with the safety catches down ready for immediate use. In France, in the days of the war, I found an aide-de-camp a pleasant companion and a useful messenger ; in Ireland he was much more, having to be continually on the alert and being daily exposed to considerable risk on my account. I always like to think that I owe my immunity from the attentions of the Irish gunmen very largely to the devotion and quick-wittedness of my two aides-de-camp, Harry Wright and Mottie.

Before the month had run its course Fate had yet another heavy blow in store.

The Irish Constitution was published 16th June, and two days later I started on a tour of inspection round Ulster, visiting the places where trouble had taken place in the West, and on my way back discussed the arrangements that had been made for the peace of the border with Sir James Craig.

At 6 p.m. on 22nd June, I reached the Royal Hospital, to be greeted with the news of the murder of Sir Henry Wilson in London. The blow was not entirely a surprise to me. A short time before, when Henry Wilson was staying with me, I had urged him to carry a small automatic in his pocket, because ever since he had left the War Office he had become more and more in the eyes of the Southern Irish a leader of Ulster activities. This was not due to anything he had done or not done, but to the misdirected zeal of his political friends and the Diehard press, who were never tired of quoting him, often inaccurately, and

dwelling upon the value of his support to Ulster and her claims.

This was particularly the case in regard to the reorganization of the Ulster Special Constabulary. I have already recorded that apart from putting before Sir James Craig certain suggestions of a most simple and common-sense nature, all tending towards the maintenance of a discipline which would curb the over-zealous activities of men influenced to some extent by religious fervour, Henry Wilson had nothing whatever to do with the operations of the Constabulary. On more than one occasion he told me that he wished people would get out of their heads the idea that he had any connection with the force. But when, in reported speeches and in press articles, the Southern Irish saw his name *constantly quoted as a champion of Ulster's rights*, they were not slow to attribute every incident that occurred in Belfast or elsewhere in Ulster, resulting in collisions between Orangemen and Catholics, to his personal initiative. Time and again I read in the Southern Irish press accounts of so-called outrages by Orangemen, for which it was claimed that Henry Wilson was responsible.

The two miscreants who murdered him were apparently not resident in Ireland, but I have never had a doubt that they were saturated with the lies they read in the Irish press and in similar publications in England, and came eventually to believe that Henry Wilson was in truth the directing spirit of every activity which resulted in the death of a Catholic. There was, so far as I am aware, no evidence to connect the two men directly with de Valera or Rory O'Connor, although no doubt they were associated with that mischievous society, the Irish Self-Determination League, in London. The distorted outpourings of a certain section of the Irish press had in the past been the prelude of more than one assassination in Ireland, and without doubt on this occasion it exercised its baneful influence on the imaginations of the misguided fanatics, who by their brutal deed

robbed the Empire of a kindly and brilliant Irishman whose greatest ideal was the good of the land of his birth.

An hour after I heard the sad news a telegram arrived calling me over to London. Arriving there the following evening, I went straight to Downing Street, to find the Prime Minister and certain members of the Government in a state of suppressed agitation in which considerations of personal safety seemed to contend with the desire to do something dramatic as a set-off against the assassination of Henry Wilson on the previous day.

I confess that I was somewhat taken aback when asked if the Dublin Four Courts, in which Rory O'Connor had been established with his Republicans for the last two months, could be captured at once by the British troops. From a military point of view the operation was comparatively simple ; indeed, plans for such a contingency had been long prepared in case the Republicans in the Four Courts should at any time molest the troops. But that such an operation, which assuredly would have the effect of uniting a large proportion of Collins's men with the Republicans, and must in any case lead to loss of life among the civilian inhabitants from the wild firing of the gunmen, should be undertaken as a counterblast to Henry Wilson's murder had never entered my head.

Having pointed out the arguments that occurred to me at the moment against the proposal, which I thought flavoured strongly of Mr. Winston Churchill's feverish impetuosity, I received instructions to return to Dublin at once, where further orders would be sent. During the night, and on the journey, I thought the matter over from all points of view, and by the time I arrived in Dublin had come to the conclusion that such a decision could only be accounted for by a bad attack of nerves on the part of those who originated it. Soon after arriving at Dublin, and while I was going over the details of the scheme with General Boyd,

whose troops would carry out the operation if it materialized, a telegram came ordering it to be put into effect the next day.

In discussing the matter with the politicians I had overlooked one important point—the safety of officers and others living outside the controlled area, and at the hour the telegram was received it was too late to ensure that every officer could be in safety by the following morning. Delay, therefore, was unavoidable. Whilst every soldier in Dublin would have been overjoyed at the opportunity of dealing with Rory O'Connor and his scallywags, the few senior officers to whom I unfolded the scheme were unanimous in their agreement that it could have but one result, the reopening of hostilities throughout Ireland.

I determined, therefore, to send Colonel Brind, my senior General Staff Officer, over that night with a letter which would admit of no ambiguity should the Government stand by their decision, emphasis being laid on the following points :—

That although the repudiation in the press by Rory O'Connor that he had instigated the murder was of little or no value, it was accepted and believed in by most of the Irish.

A sudden attack on the Four Courts was unlikely to secure O'Connor, or any of his principal adherents, as it was known that they slept at other places.

It was an open secret that at this time Collins's hold upon his men was precarious, and that the policy of de Valera and his henchman, Rory O'Connor, was if possible to irritate the British troops into activity, and then call upon those members of the I.R.A. who stood by Collins to unite against the common enemy, a call which would have been answered by a majority who would have claimed that the British had broken the truce.

All casualties among civilians, especially women and children, consequential on an attack on the Four Courts, together with damage to the building, or possibly its destruction, would for long years to come be laid to the account of the British Government.

On the following day word came through from London that the Government had reconsidered their original decision, and that no action was to be taken against the Four Courts. Anything more fatuous than the idea of such an enterprise, which would have undone everything for which the Government had striven throughout the past year, it was difficult to imagine. Had there been a shadow of proof to connect those responsible for the occupation of the Four Courts with the murderers of Henry Wilson it would have been a justification for the risk of reopening the whole Irish question, although such a move would have been wholly inconsistent with the instructions of the Government two months before, when the three officers were murdered at Macroom, and when military action against the rebels in Macroom Castle was vetoed by Mr. Winston Churchill for fear of embarrassing the political situation. It can only be supposed that panic and a desire to do something, no matter what, by those whose ignorance of the Irish situation blinded them to possible results, was at the root of this scheme.

I have never ceased to congratulate myself on having been instrumental in staving off what would have been a disaster from every point of view, except the actual capture of the buildings, and I was given to understand that the Army Council and the Cabinet, with the exception of the originator of the scheme, heaved a sigh of relief when wiser counsels prevailed. This was on Sunday, 25th June. Within forty-eight hours Rory O'Connor, irritated no doubt at being left in undisturbed possession of the Four Courts, kidnapped General O'Connell, who happened to be the Commander-in-Chief of Michael Collins's army. The hand of Michael Collins was now forced, and he was obliged, much against his will, to assert his authority.

It was, therefore, decided that the Four Courts should be attacked by men of the I.R.A. who remained staunch to him on the following day, 28th June.

Through representations to London by Cope, I received instructions to hand over two 18-pounder field guns to the Provisional Government with a reasonable supply of ammunition, of which only sufficient for our own needs was on hand, the remainder having been shipped to England preparatory to evacuation. The situation rapidly reverted to the Irish comic opera style from which we had already derived much amusement. Although the Provisional Government wanted the guns they were not at all sure that they had any men who could work them, nor was it to become known until they were in action that the British Government had loaned them.

In the end General Dalton, the one man who among Collins's officers had any knowledge of such things, came up after dark to our artillery lines with some motor lorries, on the tails of which the guns were hitched and taken down into town. At 4 a.m. the next morning the noise began, and went on all day with very little impression on the Four Courts, but with much amusement and interest to the inhabitants of Dublin, who lined up on either bank of the Liffey about a hundred yards east and west of the battle, being kept in their places by policemen in the same way as at a festival or a Lord Mayor's Show. During the day two more 18-pounders were asked for and handed over to Collins's men, and by the evening they had fired away all the ammunition.

On the previous day I had sent a destroyer to Carrickfergus for some ammunition, and telegraphed to England for more, and also for guns to replace those handed over to the Provisional Government, but neither the one nor the other had arrived on 28th. When, that evening, in answer to frantic telephone messages from Cope and from "General" O'Duffy, who apparently had replaced the kidnapped O'Connell as Commander-in-Chief, I told them they would have to wait till next day for more high-explosive shell, they metaphorically turned their faces to the wall and gave up the enterprise as lost.

O'Duffy did not fail to tell me it was my fault, and that he would telegraph to Mr. Churchill to say so, an Irishism for which I was quite prepared.

I then asked if Dalton could be sent to see me. The poor man arrived about 9-30 p.m., thoroughly worn out, but full of fight. After he had got outside a drink or two he told me his story. Having taken away the guns on the previous night and got them in position in narrow streets a hundred yards or so from the Four Courts, he set to work to train some men to load and fire them. When the fight began he had for three hours to work a gun himself, as well as to command the whole attack, such as it was. At one time two men were working one of the guns when one of them was hit by a sniper in an adjacent house, on which the other man said he was going home, and went, leaving Dalton to work the gun till he could collect another team.

I have already said that Dalton had seen service in the Great War, and while entirely agreeing with me that they would never take the Four Courts by shooting at them he said he could not get his men to risk their lives in an assault, which from our experience of their tactics I could well believe. He also told me that no arrangements had been made to ration the men, who had been without food all day. Before he left I agreed to send him fifty rounds of shrapnel, which was all we had left, simply to make a noise through the night, as he was afraid that if the guns stopped firing his men would get disheartened and clear off.

Accordingly, about every quarter of an hour during the night a shrapnel broke up against the walls of the Four Courts, making much noise but doing no harm. On the following day one of these shrapnel burst over the Royal Hospital. Shortly afterwards an apology arrived, from which it appeared that the gun had gone off by mistake! On the first night of the attack—28th June—things seemed to be going so badly with the

Provisional Government, and the nerves of the civil officials at the Castle to be so strained, that I sent a company of infantry to the Castle in case the attack failed and the Republicans became aggressive. All officers living outside the controlled area were also brought in.

On the afternoon of 29th June I went round to the Provisional Government offices to see Michael Collins, and to discuss the heavy demands he had made through Cope for arms and other engines of war. Mulcahy was with him, and they at once started complaining that their want of success was due to the lack of gun ammunition. I told them that we had not *anticipated such demands, especially as from the press* they seemed to be getting on so well in the country, and were so desirous that all British troops should clear out, which led us to reduce our stocks, a little thrust which Collins appreciated, but I am afraid it was lost on Mulcahy, who had not his comrade's sense of humour.

Curiously enough, the wise men at Downing Street in their excitement also seemed to attribute the delay in taking the Four Courts to the negligence of the Army authorities in not having more ammunition to give away, forgetting, apparently, that we had plenty for our own needs, and that it would have been a breach of the truce terms to have imported a superfluity. At the same time I impressed on Collins that no amount of bombarding would get the rebels out of the Four Courts, as they were probably smoking and drinking in safety in the cellars, and that unless an assault was made, preferably at night, when the gates could be blown in without much loss, they might go on for ever.

During our interview Collins told me that he had a complaint to make against the British troops. It appeared that some soldiers escorting ammunition to be handed over to the Provisional Government, and seeing a shell bursting against the



Four Courts had in their light-hearted way set up a cheer, thinking also no doubt that it would hearten up Collins's men. Unfortunately the Irishmen took the matter very seriously, and considered that it was just as grave a matter to fire a shell at the Republicans as for the Republicans to fire at them, and made a complaint about it.

A somewhat similar incident occurred on the same day of which Collins was not aware. An officer, who was out to "see the fun," managed to get into the Bridewell behind the Four Courts, and stood watching one of the Provisional Government men exchanging shots with a rebel in the Four Courts not more than 150 yards off. The officer gave the man, who seemed to have little knowledge of how to use a rifle, some hints, and then said: "Here, give me your rifle." "Indeed I will not," said the man, "you might kill the poor boy!" Was it a wonder that the Provisional Government took a long time to take the place?

On the way back to the Royal Hospital we were sniped by a nest of Republicans on the South Circular Road. I informed Collins, who had them turned out, and burned the house. That night somebody damaged the telephone to London, so we all had a quiet night, for which we were grateful.

About 11 p.m. on 29th the Provisional Government troops obtained a footing in the Four Courts, which during the next day were seen to be on fire. About noon on 30th June several explosions took place in the building, and at 4 p.m. the remainder of the garrison, about 150 men, including Rory O'Connor and Liam Mellows, surrendered. By night-time the dome had fallen in, and the building, one of the architectural ornaments of Dublin, was a smoking ruin. The senseless destruction of the Four Courts by the Republicans after they had made up their minds to surrender, involving as it did the destruction of the valuable law library and record office filled with ecclesiastical and

testamentary documents dating from the thirteenth century, had the effect of irritating the Provisional Government troops against the Republicans to an extent not hitherto reached, which in itself was a desirable consequence, especially as at the time rumours were afloat of endeavours by the Archbishop of Dublin and the irrepressible Lord Mayor to bring about an accommodation between the two parties, the worst thing that could happen if the Provisional Government was to be maintained.

Although the ruins of the Four Courts had been cleared of Rory O'Connor and his men, there was still plenty of work to be done in ejecting Republican gunmen from houses they had occupied in different parts of the city. The south side of the Liffey was cleared up by 3rd July, but de Valera, Cathal Brugha (alias Charles Burgess), and some desperadoes still held hotels and other buildings in Sackville Street, facing the ruins resulting from the 1916 rebellion. During these days I received constant wires and instructions to supply Collins with rifles, ammunition, and other armament, but judging by the delay which occurred before the arms were drawn by Collins's men it struck me that the need had been somewhat exaggerated by the nervous excitement of Cope and the Colonial Office officials, who had developed an unfortunate habit of sending hysterical instructions on purely military matters without consulting the War Office, a procedure which could only result in further delay.

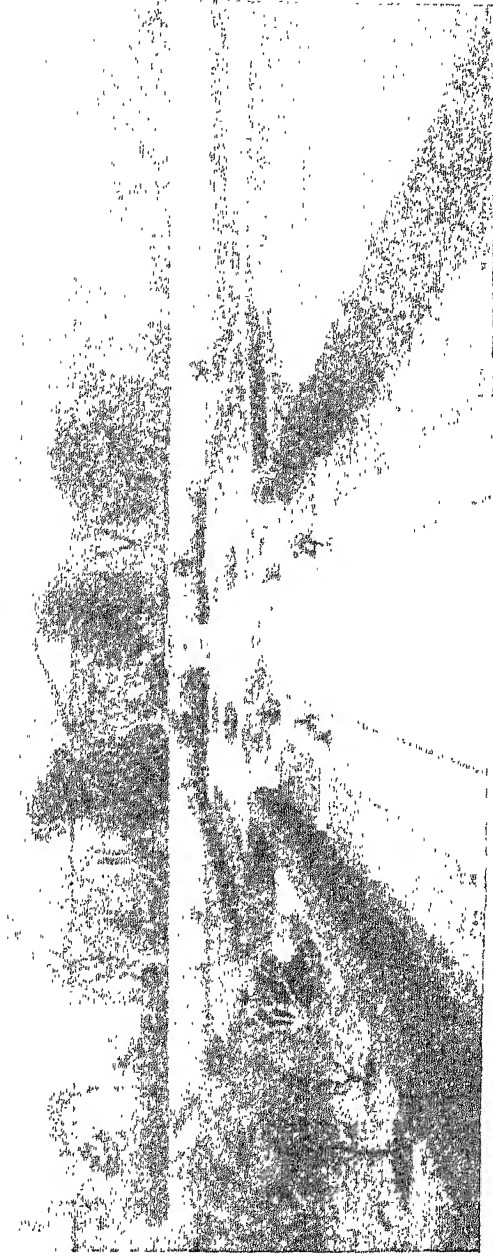
As a matter of fact, the Provisional Government was at this time amply supplied with everything they required to bring the Republican gunmen under control. One thing alone was wanting, the *will* to carry the operations through at the risk of some sacrifice of life. The tactics pursued by both sides consisted in shooting away from under cover until ammunition was expended, or the Republicans had sneaked away with their arms only to start again when opportunity offered.

On the morning of 5th July fires broke out in the buildings held

by the Republicans in Sackville Street, and in the direction of Arbour Hill, a prelude to their surrender, which took place during the afternoon. A certain number of prisoners were taken by the Provisional Government troops, among them Burgess, one of the leaders, who was found to be mortally wounded, but de Valera and many others escaped, not, I am inclined to think, without the connivance of some of their opponents. While the casualties on both sides were inconsiderable, the destruction of property was enormous, unnecessary, and uncalled-for, nor would it have occurred if the operations which began on 28th June had from the beginning been carried through with energy and determination.

Quiet having been more or less restored in Dublin, broken only by occasional shots at night from light-hearted Republicans, or excitable sentries in the Provisional Government barracks, Collins began to turn his attention to the outlying districts, and called for volunteers on a six months' engagement to fill up the ranks of that portion of the I.R.A. which remained faithful to Arthur Griffith and himself. Dalton, with whom I had a talk on the subject, seemed quite sanguine, provided his politicians remained firm and the Church did not interfere, sentiments with which I agreed, expressing a hope that as regards his first proviso his politicians might prove an exception to the general run of their trade.

During the middle of July I extracted a forecast of the future intentions of the Government, by which sixteen battalions were to remain in Ulster, and the garrison of Dublin, which would not be allowed to drop below 5,500 fighting men, was to remain for an indefinite period with what was termed a "watching brief," a very elastic political form of words which might mean anything when applied to the kaleidoscopic situation in that explosive capital. When I pressed for a definition of this form of words I found that it implied the assertion of Imperial authority should occasion arise, until such time as the Free State was installed, or, in military



CHAPEL AND MASTER'S HOUSE, ROYAL HOSPITAL, DUBLIN



language, the troops were indefinitely to "continue the motion" they had been practising since the truce of July, 1921.

The month of July passed fairly peacefully, the Republicans being exhausted by their late efforts in Dublin, and the Provisional Government busy organizing their armed men. A few murders, and a good deal of country-house burning took place in various parts of the country, and on two occasions de Valera's men were foolish enough to snipe at destroyers off the west coast, in return for which they got a few shells from quick-firing guns that had a soothing effect.

At Dublin there were at this time two General Headquarters, the British and that of the Provisional Government. The duplication was not without its advantages, as on several occasions telegrams and letters were delivered by mistake at my office, the contents of which were interesting and sometimes amusing. One telegram in particular, addressed to G.H.Q., Dublin, from Paris, informed us that a certain MacCartan was in correspondence with the Russian Soviet at Moscow.

August, 1922, was a black month for the Provisional Government. The burning of several important buildings in Queens-town, including the hospital and the lately vacated Admiral's house, the capture of Dundalk, and other minor outrages against British troops and civilians paled into insignificance before the deaths of Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins.

Griffith succumbed to heart failure on 12th August, accelerated by the strain of the past eight months, and by anxiety lest his life's work should be thrown away through the blind fanaticism of a section of his countrymen just as the goal was in sight. Except on one occasion I was never brought into contact with Arthur Griffith, but from much evidence, and from what I gleaned in conversation with other men of the inner circle of Sinn Féin, I am satisfied that he was in the main opposed to the policy of physical force, and though no less determined to "establish in Ireland's capital a

National Legislature endowed with the moral authority of the Irish nation," he looked rather to dogged passive resistance as the principal means to that end than to the bloodthirsty and destructive courses encouraged by the majority of his colleagues.

His mantle fell naturally on the shoulders of Michael Collins, who within ten days was to fall a victim to the bullet of one of his own countrymen. The increased activities of de Valera's gunmen and the death of Griffith made it necessary that the Provisional Government troops should be heartened up and urged to greater activity. To this end Collins paid a visit to Cork, always a hotbed of rebellion, and on 22nd August was held up by Republicans at Bealnablath near the scene of a brutal murder of some police during the "war." Collins and his escort put up a stiff fight, and in the end the Republicans were driven off, but not before Collins, who was firing from behind a bank, was killed by a bullet in the head.

Although his death at the hands of the men lying in ambush was officially accepted, rumours were soon afloat which reflected on the crew of the armoured car which formed part of the escort, rumours that seemed to have had some justification when shortly afterwards it was reported that the man in charge of the car had taken it off and joined up with de Valera's men. When one considers the impulsive instability of the Irish as a race, and what may be called the friendly enmity that had existed between the two parties since de Valera hoisted his standard of rebellion against the supporters of the treaty, it would be a matter of no surprise if it was ever proved that Collins had fallen a victim to misplaced confidence.

He was buried in Dublin on 28th August, and by the irony of Fate the gun carriage which bore the coffin was one of those loaned for the attack on the Four Courts, and was drawn by four horses belonging to the British artillery, which were purchased for the purpose by the Provisional Government, a transaction which

was not got over without some difficulty on account of the men of the battery feeling, perhaps naturally, aggrieved that their horses should be employed on such a service.

To all soldiers of whatever rank who served in Ireland from 1919 to 1921 Michael Collins was, and must for ever be, the embodiment of a campaign of ruthless murder carried out by men styling themselves soldiers of the Irish Republic, but who systematically ignored every condition of warfare recognized among civilized nations. It could, therefore, hardly be expected that the old bitterness would in a moment be swept away, notwithstanding the tragedy of his death at the hands of those he had trained and encouraged.

The general feeling in Dublin at the moment was that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find men to replace Griffith and Collins of sufficient ability and determination to carry through the provisions of the treaty and the establishment of the Free State. Failure to do so would assuredly have resulted in a triumph for the irresponsible rabble in whose hands de Valera was rapidly becoming a puppet, urged on at the bidding of the extreme terrorists of his following. Whatever the political consequences might be, the possibilities of the military situation seemed even more perplexing, seeing that even a slight accession of strength to the Republican cause must bring about a state of affairs similar to that which existed before the truce, with the additional disadvantages that both in Great Britain and Ireland the Army was in a state of depletion, whilst the Irish were in possession of enormous quantities of arms and ammunition.

Mr. Churchill once told me he enjoyed taking risks. He ought assuredly to have enjoyed himself during the time he was responsible for Irish affairs at the Colonial Office. Fate, however, proved kind to the treatyites on both sides of the Channel, for in William Cosgrave and Richard Mulcahy two men stepped forward to fill the vacant places, who, if they did not at first



inspire universal confidence, proved for a time loyal to their obligations towards the British Government, and determined to assert their authority in their own country by means far more drastic than any which the British Government dared to impose during the worst period of the rebellion.

Michael Collins, as a leader of his countrymen, seemed to suffer from a soft strain in his nature which made him averse to drastic measures against those who had been his comrades and boon companions, a trait which was responsible for the failure to check the Republicans on the day when, in April, 1922, Rory O'Connor with blatant impertinence first occupied the Dublin Four Courts. In addition to this, knowing the man, and closely following his public utterances, I have always doubted that he looked upon the treaty as anything but a step towards the complete freedom of the country, in other words a Republic, and thus there existed within him a latent sympathy towards the aims of those in arms against his Government. Had he lived I question whether he could have hardened his heart, or his conscience, sufficiently to stamp out the embers of rebellion, or to deal with his former comrades in arms and politics even to the extent afterwards achieved by Richard Mulcahy.

The weeks which elapsed before Cosgrave and Mulcahy were confirmed in their appointments of President of the Dail and Minister of Defence was a period of tension and anxiety throughout all the Southern counties, and although the Provisional Government continued to make some headway against the rebels, it was impossible from day to day to foresee what the morrow might bring forth.

As a set-off against the tension existing in the South, comparative peace reigned in Ulster, due in a great measure to the adoption of Henry Wilson's proposals for the organization and control of the Constabulary, and to the efforts of the officers who had been selected to carry out the scheme.

On 19th October, the news that the Government of Mr. Lloyd George had resigned was received with a sigh of relief by the Irish garrison, who looked forward to the advent of a Government who would relieve them from an indefinite prolongation of the "watching brief," and from the startling surprises to which they had momentarily been liable under the wayward direction of Mr. Churchill.

I was well aware that while for political reasons members of the Provisional Government publicly clamoured for the complete removal of the troops, they were equally insistent in urging on the Colonial Office to make no precipitate move in that direction, because they doubted their capacity to hold the barracks that would be vacated by the Army. I prepared a memorandum on the subject for the benefit of the new Secretaries of State for War and for the Colonies, reiterating the well-worn arguments against leaving the dwindling remnant of troops in a position which, while being undignified and possibly dangerous, could under no circumstances achieve any result beyond reopening the whole Irish question in the event of their being called upon to defend themselves ; urging at the same time that they should be removed at the earliest possible date after the inauguration of the Free State Government, a solution which was accepted by Mr. Bonar Law's Cabinet, and agreed to by Mr. Cosgrave on behalf of the Free State.

It was very pleasant, when calling in at the War Office towards the end of November, to find Lord Derby in occupation of the Secretary of State's room, where I had worked under him in the stormy days of the Great War. It was then arranged that the move of the troops should begin on 14th December, and be completed by 18th, after which date the English railways would be congested owing to the Christmas traffic. On this occasion Lord Derby offered me the refusal of the Eastern Command when it became vacant in the following June. I told him that his

predecessor some months before had pressed me to take the same appointment, but that I had made up my mind to bring my official career to a close when my command in Ireland expired, and I still wished to adhere to that decision.

The news that the dates for clearing out of Ireland were at last fixed, and that Christmas would be spent in a land where it was possible to walk about outside the barracks without looking at every civilian to see if his pocket bulged with a revolver, was a joy and a relief to all ranks, although here and there I did hear expressions of regret among young officers who lamented the loss of sport at a reasonable figure.

On 21st November, the anniversary of the "November Murders," a memorial service, attended by detachments of all units of the garrison, was held in the Royal Hospital Chapel for the officers and other ranks who had laid down their lives in Ireland during the years 1920-1922. Of the total number, forty-four officers and one hundred and eighteen other ranks had come by their deaths up to the time of the truce of July, 1921, whilst nine officers and nine other ranks had been murdered since the truce.

If as the years roll on peace, unity for Ireland, and loyalty to the Empire are the outcome of the sacrifice made for their country by these gallant men their deaths will not have been in vain. God grant it may be so.

## CHAPTER XXII.

FROM the record of the past two-and-a-half years, a record, owing to political exigencies replete with the restrictions of having "to make war as we must and not as we should like to," to borrow a phrase from Lord Kitchener, it might be thought that of all soldiers I should have felt the least regret at seeing the last of the shores of Ireland. But as the time for departure drew near a very real regret grew up within me, regret at leaving the old Royal Hospital at Kilmainham, the last of a long line of "Masters" dating back to 1684, amongst whom are numbered names immortalized in the deeds of our Army from Sir Ralph Abercromby in 1797 to Lord Roberts just a century later. There was a curious atmosphere of peace about the old place utterly foreign to its surroundings, and in looking back through the memories of bygone years that clustered thickly about the building and grounds one could for a time forget the seething unrest of the world outside.

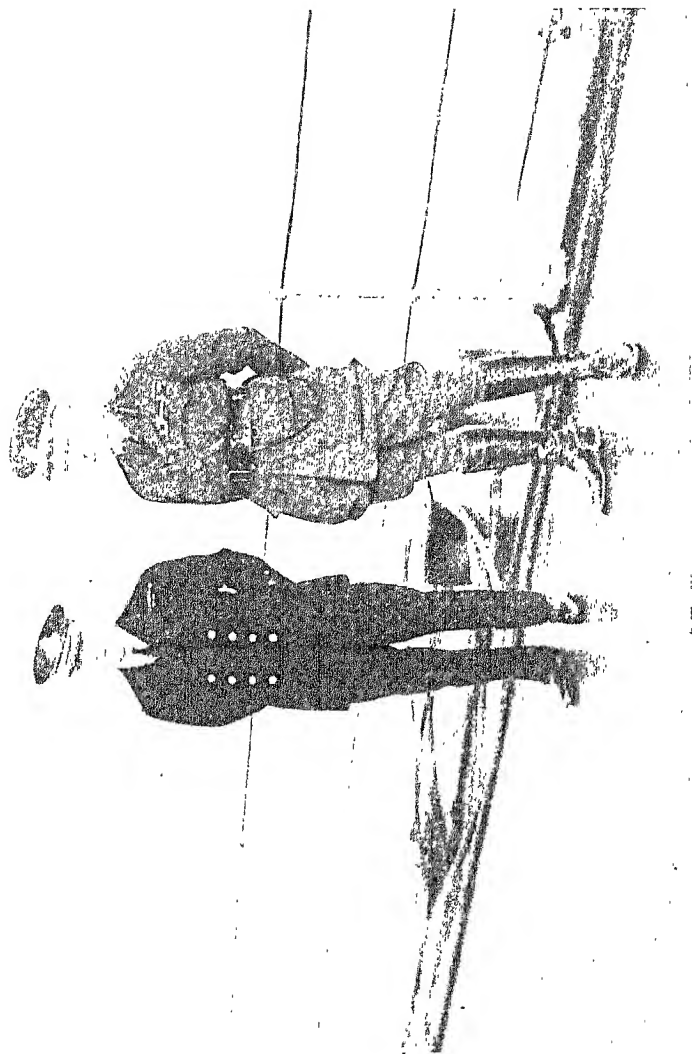
Few places can lay claim to such stores of traditional and historical interest as are crowded within the boundaries of the Royal Hospital. In the disused graveyard, alongside the last resting-place of the old pensioners, stands a broken shaft said by tradition to mark the graves of Murrough and Turlough, the son and grandson of the Irish hero Brian Boru, who met their deaths fighting against the Danes at the Battle of Clontarf, and were buried under the shade of the ruins of St. Maignend's Monastery. In 1174 Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, the official ancestor of all Commanders-in-Chief of British forces in Ireland, established a priory for the Knights Templars who, when their

order fell into disgrace, were replaced early in the fourteenth century by the Knights Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. In the reign of Henry VIII the priory and its lands were surrendered to the Crown and gradually allowed to fall into decay.

The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, as it stands to-day, is one of three famous institutions erected during the last half of the seventeenth century for the reception and care of disabled soldiers, the other two being the Royal Hospital, Chelsea (in whose foundation Sweet Nell of Old Drury exercised her interest with the Merry Monarch), and the Invalides, in Paris, erected by Louis XIV for the victims of his many wars.

To Arthur, Earl of Granard, about the year 1675, belongs the credit of first suggesting the necessity for some institution to support the numbers of soldiers belonging to the "Army of Ireland" who had grown old and disabled in the service of the Crown, but owing to the bugbear of financial stringency, which has ever exercised its baneful influence over the fortunes of the profession of arms in the British Isles, no steps were taken towards a realization of the scheme until 1679, when James, Duke of Ormonde, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, having overcome the financial difficulties, obtained a charter from Charles II authorizing the erection of the hospital. The foundation stone was laid by the Duke on 29th April, 1680, and in less than four years the hospital was completed as it stands to-day, accommodation being provided for three hundred pensioners.

On the accession of James II Ormonde was recalled, and in the great hall of the hospital gave a farewell banquet to the officers of the Army in Ireland. Except for a few turbulent years during which Tyrconnel endeavoured to change the constitution of the Hospital it has remained a peaceful oasis for old veterans, and the official home of the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland. In the garden, near to a mulberry tree said to have been



ADMIRAL C. H. FOX AND AUTHOR ABOARD H.M.S. "DRAGON"  
December 17, 1924



planted by James II, lie the remains of Lord Roberts's charger "Vonolel," whose statue bearing his old master now stands on the Horse Guards' Parade in Whitehall.

In the regret at leaving these time-honoured surroundings was mingled a feeling of painful curiosity regarding the ultimate fate of the old place. Rumours were not wanting as to the intentions of the Free State Government which ranged from the appropriation of the buildings as a lunatic asylum, or a college, to their being converted into a Parliament House, a solution which at any rate would ensure the preservation of one of the few historical buildings remaining in Ireland that has escaped destruction through the stormy centuries of its existence.

While I was in residence, finding that there was no concise history of the Royal Hospital obtainable, I arranged for the publication of a revised and amplified edition of an excellent little book which had been brought out in 1892 at Lord Wolseley's instigation in order to stimulate public interest in the historic building, and for the benefit of the old soldiers who found shelter within its walls, to whose needs any profits of the sale are devoted. Captain R. Nation, my Assistant Military Secretary, undertook the work, and produced a very complete little story of the institution and of the historic spot on which it stands.

The dates for the evacuation of the troops having been fixed, events moved rapidly in military circles. Surplus stores were either handed over to the Free State Government or shipped to England, and arrangements made for handing over the barracks and other places within the controlled area, as they were vacated by the troops, in such a way as to ensure reasonable means of defence in case at the eleventh hour an outburst should occur, a contingency which, from previous experience, had to be guarded against until the last of the troops were safely out of range. The colours of various regiments that had long hung in the chapel and in the great hall of the Royal Hospital were disposed of according



to the wishes of the regiments concerned, and the armour, arms, and other trophies, which for the most part had been loaned from the Tower of London to decorate the walls of the great hall, were dismantled and returned to the Tower.

On 2nd December Cope called at the Royal Hospital, and told me that Tim Healy\* had been offered, and had accepted, the Governor-Generalship of the Free State. No better choice could have been made for a position which would have been impossible for any man, however talented, who by birth and upbringing was not ingrained with the peculiarities of the inhabitants of the new State, and welcomed as a *persona grata* by the majority. In Mr. Healy is combined a spirit of unswerving loyalty to the Crown, an intimate knowledge of his compatriots, and a kindly disposition which cannot fail to endear him even to those fanatics—and they are not a few—who resent the presence of any representative of the Crown. May he be spared to enjoy a quiet evening to his life after weathering successfully the difficulties and dangers of a position which can only be appreciated by those who have enjoyed first-hand experience of the turbulent elements over whom he holds sway.

Four days after the announcement of Tim Healy's appointment came the proclamation setting up the Free State Government, which was received with apparent apathy and indifference in Dublin. From what I saw when strolling through the town a general air of depression seemed to have settled on the place, no demonstrations, no music or occasional revolver shots, no flags, except a few whitish-looking bits of bunting that once displayed the green, yellow, and white national colours but had become washed out by rain and sun. One might have thought that instead of the occasion being the declaration of almost

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\* Timothy Michael Healy, Esq., K.C. Bencher, Gray's Inn, 1910. M.P. Wexford, 1880-1883; County Monaghan, 1883-1885; South Londonderry, 1885-1886; North Longford, 1887-1892; North Louth, 1892-1910; North-East Cork, 1910-1918. Author of numerous works on Ireland.

absolute independence it was the announcement of the return of the oppressor.

Possibly, on the one hand people were wondering how this new development might affect their pockets, and on the other regretting that a time-honoured cause of grievance had been swept away. Whatever the cause may have been, I was impressed by the fact as I walked home that the gloom and indifference depicted on the faces of the people was only equalled by the proverbial dirt of the streets.

On 10th December the last parade service was held in the chapel of the Royal Hospital, and for the last time the notes of the National Anthem died away within its walls.

The wisdom of the words put into the mouth of Macbeth by the Immortal Bard, that "time and the hour runs through the roughest day," came forcibly home to me as on 14th December, 1922, the first brigade of the garrison to leave Ireland marched through the Royal Hospital grounds on their way to the quays. They were the troops from Richmond and Island Bridge Barracks, the right flank of our controlled area. All troops marched through the town in full marching order with their colours, bands playing, and such pomp and circumstance as present-day uniforms permit. In appearance and bearing they well upheld the name and traditions of that Army which for past centuries had been a familiar sight in the Dublin streets, where its uniform may perhaps never be seen again. Armoured cars watched the line of route, and all ranks were on the alert to repel any attempt which might be made by de Valera's followers to embroil the departing troops.

On the following day another brigade from the Phoenix Park, and the artillery from Marlborough Barracks marched off, and on Saturday, 16th December, I held a parade of the old pensioners in the quadrangle of the Hospital, bidding them as their Master farewell, and assuring them that whatever might be

the fate in store for their home I was confident that the British Government would safeguard their interests, and make provision for their comfort.

As I shook each old man by the hand it made me sad to think that these fine old soldiers, the direct successors of the men who fought for King Charles under Ormonde, and under William III at the Boyne, and who on their breasts were wearing the medals of wars that have now passed into the history of the Empire, must be left behind as the rearguard of the British Army in Ireland. Whatever arrangement may be made for the welfare of the old pensioners in the future it is to be hoped that it may be on a scale to command a degree of comfort and attention not less than they received when their interests were watched over by the Governors of the Royal Hospital.

The detail for Sunday, 17th December, had been carefully worked out, as I had no desire to witness the occupation of the Royal Hospital by the Free State troops, who could have but little reverence for its associations. As the clock struck nine Sergeant-Major Kennedy, an old rifleman, who for twenty-six years had officiated as doorkeeper to the Commander-in-Chief's residence, hauled down the Union Jack from the flagstaff on the lawn, a relic he was allowed to take to his home in England ; at the same moment I left in my car, just catching sight at the end of the western avenue of the Free State Guard entering the gate, and passing through a double line of the pensioners went to the infirmary to say good-bye to the old men who were under treatment there, many of them quietly awaiting the Last Call.

In the meantime General Mulcahy, who had personally taken over the headquarter office in the old infirmary building, that dates back to the middle of the eighteenth century, after hoisting the Free State flag, proceeded with his Staff to the Royal Barracks (afterwards rechristened Collins's Barracks), where in a burst of patriotic oratory he told his troops that "the incubus of occupation



THE AUTHOR'S MOTHER



that had lain as a heavy load on their country for years had been removed that morning."

While this was going on I stationed myself on the road, opposite to the Royal Barracks, to take the salute of the remaining British regiments, the Leicesters, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Worcesters, and Border Regiment, as they marched off to the transports. The scene was a curious one. Among the crowd, which was considerable, many men and women cheered continuously as they waved small Union Jacks, and all, including several Free State officers in their slate-green uniforms, saluted the regimental colours as they passed. A strong detachment of the Legion of Irish ex-Servicemen was present, who very kindly gave me a badge of their association as a memento. At the docks the crowd was so dense that it was with difficulty the last battalion got through. The utmost good-humour was shown by the crowd, and no untoward incident occurred to mar the last moments of the British occupation, many hats even being raised when the band on the last troopship struck up the National Anthem as she moved slowly away.

As soon as I had seen the last of the battalions march by I motored off to Kingstown with Colonel Brind, my chief General Staff Officer, and Colonel Evans, the Deputy Quartermaster-General. The Admiralty had been good enough to place H.M.S. "Dragon" at my disposal for the trip across the Channel, and as I stepped from the pier on to the pinnacle the guns thundered out a salute to mark the departure of the last of a long line of men who from the days of Strongbow had commanded the forces of the Crown in Ireland.

On board the "Dragon" I found my very good friend and colleague, Admiral C. H. Fox, who had done much in the past by ever-ready co-operation to help the soldiers in their difficult task, and thanks to whose arrangements the embarkation of the troops passed off without a hitch.

We had to submit to that modern infliction of being photographed together by a ubiquitous pressman, but it came as a shock to me two days later to see the picture in a Dublin paper, headed "Two Gallant Irishmen." To anybody who knows the Admiral's record the adjective was certainly well applied in his case, and I was only too happy to share his reflected glory, though I was not aware that he claimed the nationality of the land we had left. I certainly never had, the only drop of Irish blood in my veins having filtered through from a grandfather who was born in the days of George II.

At 3 p.m. the "Dragon," in company with H.M. destroyer "Wolsey," left Kingstown Harbour and anchored in the bay about a mile outside to await the arrival of the "Venomous" from the entrance of the Dublin Docks, where she had been guarding the embarkation of the troops at North Wall. The armoured car company which had been retained to escort the troops through the streets of Dublin, left for Ulster as soon as that duty was accomplished, and between 4 and 5 p.m., soon after the "Venomous" had rejoined her consorts, a wireless message came through to say that the company was safely clear of Southern Ireland.

One more message, the last to be sent by his troops to the last Commander of British Forces in Ireland, was handed in: "All ranks on the steamship 'Arvonian,' the last to leave Southern Ireland, wish you good-bye and every best wish for Christmas and the future."

In the gathering darkness the "Dragon" and her accompanying destroyers steamed out of Dublin Bay, and as the lights of Howth sank in the distance the curtain fell on the Irish drama in which British troops had played their part for 750 years.

A few days later I was received at Buckingham Palace by His Majesty the King, who, with the sympathy which he always shows towards the doings of his troops, seemed greatly interested

in the account of the closing scenes, and expressed his satisfaction that they were unmarked by any untoward incident.

A visit to the War Office, to take an official farewell of Lord Derby and the many friends there who, throughout the difficult days in Ireland, had in every department given me the utmost support compatible with political restrictions, brought my professional career to a close.



THE END.